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THE  
CARPENTER OF ROUEN;

OR,  
THE SECRET ORDER OF THE CONFRÉRIE.

A DRAMATIC TALE

*Joseph Stevens*  
BY J. S. JONES, M. D.

"The . . . . . knows our purpose and our plot;  
The matter being afoot, keep your instruction,  
And hold you ever to our special drift;  
Though sometimes you do blench from this to that,  
As cause doth minister."

BOSTON:  
PHILLIPS, SAMPSON, AND COMPANY.  
1849.



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## PREFACE.

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SOME years since, two dramas were produced by the author, under the titles of "CARPENTER OF ROUEN," and "SURGEON OF PARIS." The history of the persecutions of the Huguenots, in the sixteenth century, furnished the suggestive material for these two plays, both of which have been popular upon the stage.

For the purposes of the theatre, the historical allusions were sufficiently clear. The combined effects of scenery and machinery, with appropriate costumes, aiding the reproduction of events so chronicled, give an acted story a reality and power, appreciable by an auditor, which no conventional description in words can approach.

Still the author prefers to publish these episodes of the reign of Catherine de Medicis and her family as **DRAMATIC TALES**, rather than from the original prompter's copies, as used in the theatre.

It may be thought, by some persons, that the spirit of the story is not in accordance with the taste of the present times. To such persons, the author would speak his own views, in the words of an able writer upon the subject, who says, —

"It may be curious to compare the manners of our own age with those of the past. The actions of men in the sixteenth century should not be judged according to our ideas of the nineteenth; that which is a crime in a state of perfect civilization is only a piece of hardihood at a less advanced period, and in an age of barbarism may be considered praiseworthy."

Those who are acquainted with the history of the Huguenots, will not, it is believed, discover any material departure from the sanguinary records of the time involved in their persecution, in that part of either work which is the invention of the author.

Those who are interested in that division of literature devoted to secret associations, may find the prototype of the "Confrérie of St. Bartholomew" under many names, although its origin and chief designs are still veiled in that mystery which must ever cover the objects of association, for good or ill, guarded by such rites as attended the doings of the confrères of St. Bartholomew.

The author, in conclusion, would remark, that the unpretending volume to which this preface is to be attached, may contain errors of style and faults of construction, some of which are so only in appearance; the Surgeon of Paris, when referred to, will render clear those passages and events which in the Carpenter of Rouen may appear obscure — the incidents and action of the one having connection with the other.

J. S. J.

MAY, 1849.

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# THE CARPENTER OF ROUEN.

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## PART I.

### THE SQUARE OF THE MARTYRS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE COURIER.

IN a thick forest on the road from Tours, a courier from Paris lay wounded; around him were letters and despatches; their seals broken; some torn in fragments, others carelessly thrown by, and stained with the blood of the faithful messenger, who had fought manfully in the defence of the trust reposed in him, and was fatally injured in the performance of his duty. He had been attacked on the highway, disabled, and dragged into the wood, where the contents of his travelling-bag had been rifled, and he left to die or live, as chance should determine.

He had been some hours in this condition,—part of the time delirious,—when his faint cries for water reached the ears of a woodcutter, who had come earlier than usual to cut fuel for marketing in the city.

He followed the sounds of distress, and was at the

side of the wounded man. He repeated his cries for water; the woodman gave him drink from his flask; the wine it contained refreshed him, but under its influence his wounds bled afresh.

"By St. Gregory," said the woodman, "these are gashes indeed; and it would take the skill of Master Paré, of Paris, to stop their bleeding without hot pitch. But I must try."

Taking some moss from the trees, he applied it to the largest wound upon his head, and bound it close with a piece of linen from the dress of the wounded courier. The bleeding from the lesser wounds was stopped, either from the exhausted state of the wounded man, or from the pressure of the dressings, rude as they were. Still he was unable to speak more than two or three words at a time, and for the most part they were disconnected and unintelligible. He pointed to his belt, and by signs made known his wishes to the woodcutter.

"Who are you, friend?" said the woodcutter; "and what has caused this misfortune?"

"I am a courier; my destination, Rouen." The effort to speak again caused him to faint; while the woodman applied such means of restoration as his narrow source of information enabled him to use, and such as were at his disposal. The wine seemed the most efficient. His supply for a day's hard labor was nearly expended; but it was given, not grudgingly, in the hope of relieving a fellow-creature from suffering, if not from death. The courier revived again.

"Tell me, friend," said the woodcutter, "how this mishap came upon you; and if you will accept such care as my poor family may give you, and such

shelter as my hut will afford, I will lead you thither, and all I can do for you shall be done."

"No," said the courier, "human aid cannot save me from death. Had I completed the object of my journey, the coming death would cause in me no pang. The great work, I fear, will suffer."

"Explain," said the woodcutter.

"I was despatched from Tours with news from Rome, on a secret mission. As I crossed the bridge, near the stream to the south of the lake, three men on horseback joined me. We rode together for a few miles, when they cautioned me against brigands, who, as they said, held rendezvous in the forest that from this point stretches miles to the mountains, running east. We parted at the inn. Night overtook me at this place. Suddenly I was attacked by these same men, who had travelled with me by day. I fell, wounded and helpless. They searched me for documents, which the leader, as he seemed, with an oath, demanded, calling the names of those who are high in power, and who in Paris are known as friends to the queen. I spoke not. They thought me dead. You see around you the testimony of their doings. Yet they found not what they sought."

"Had you such documents as the leader claimed?"

"I had. Could I trust you, you should know the place where they are concealed, and whither they are to go."

"You may trust me in any honest work, or to aid any honest cause. I am poor, and seek not to be rich."

"These are times, woodman, when men may not speak their minds to strangers. I owe to you my



life, even for the hour. There has been blood shed in cities and in towns; the life stream of the rich and poor have contributed to swell the sea which rolls even to the gateways of the Louvre. The Catholic and the Huguenot war against each other. If we both are of either side, we are friends; if of the opposite parties, though you have saved me in this hour of tribulation, we are foes."

"I am the stronger here," said the woodman, "and near my home. I am Huguenot, and shall not play falsely, if you are of another creed."

"I, too, am Huguenot," said the courier, "and we are friends. In a word, tell me, if you can, the letters on that stone." He drew from his bosom an oval stone, suspended by a steel chain. "This is an amulet I wear—a charm—the traveller's stone, we call it. In all countries some may be found who believe in its power. Those who do, can read the charm. We trust them that can give its meaning in language of their own."

The woodcutter looked at the stone.

"A trick of the learned ones of Paris, is it not? Well, if I read backwards the letters there, and place the ciphers at their value when alone, your stone amulet bears the name of 'Ambrose Paré.' Him I own as the master of us all."

The courier grasped his hand. "We are both confrères," said he.

"I will not own it, but will do as one, when there is a time of need. When did you leave Paris?"

"The first day of the month. I shall never again see the Louvre. Brother, your name."

"Ambercet. Why ask?" said the woodcutter.

"The name of a common man is not cared for beyond his own dwelling."

"I am called Pernon. Take this packet to Rouen. Find there a carpenter, whose shop is in the Square of the Martyrs. Give this to his hands; let no one see the act. If I survive these wounds, I will see him in good time." He removed from his belt a packet, which he handed to the woodcutter. "This has been concealed, as you see, and is safe." The woodcutter received the packet.

"I do not perceive any direction. Who is the carpenter you named?"

"Marteau; do not forget it. The intelligence is for him, and cannot reach another, if it is lost. It is in cipher and symbol. Take these to the same man. He will see them properly delivered."

"I will," said Ambergcet, who began to gather up the broken letters, and the fragments of such as had been torn. In the mean while, Pernon supported himself against the trunk of a large tree. His strength was failing.

"Come," said he, "lead me to a shelter. My horse may be still in the road. Unless I have a surgeon, I am not long for this world. Ere the sun rises, I shall bleed to death."

Ambergcet had secured the packets and letters, and was ready to leave the wood. The shrill neighing of a horse was heard not far off.

"That is my animal," said Pernon; "he will bear me to your cottage; then mount him, and ride to Rouen. Come."

Ambergcet supported the courier along the path in the direction of the road side. The animal recog-

nized his master, even in the darkness. In a few minutes, by the aid of Ambercet, Pernon was on the saddle, and slowly retracing his way to the house of the woodcutter.

Not a hundred yards from the spot where these two persons encountered each other was a ravine. A tree which had fallen across in its narrowest part had served as a bridge, on which a nimble-footed and courageous traveller might have crossed in safety to the opposite rocky ledge, and thus save a distance of nearly a mile, to where the usual crossing place was found.

Three men, rudely dressed, were standing upon this ledge. One held a lantern, the second an opened paper, the third a sword. He with the lantern had the appearance and manners of an old debauchee, of a vulgar rank. He seemed a soldier, and his face was scarred by many wounds. He with the paper was slim and spare. The expression of his face indicated hard study and deep thought. His mind seemed chained to the paper in his hand. The third, by his outward appearance, might have passed for a soldier or brigand, though clad in a style of garments similar to the other two. There was apparent a different kind of carriage, a polish, even in his rude expressions of command, which gave token of higher social position and acknowledged superiority.

"Well, L'Araignée," said the man with the lantern, "can't you see?"

"Yes," was his reply.

"Read out, my master. I employed you in this business, because they told me at Notre Dame that no language tongue ever spoke, or pen had written, but

you could make good French of. How is this? I ask for a translation in Spanish or Italian, if you can't make it in French; or even a German pattern will do. I can understand a little of all with the Briton's idiom, — indeed, a Scotch song or so I have sung before now, and was thought a linguist, as well as songster."

"My eyes never rested on characters like these," said he of the spare form. "I might in time make out the cipher, if I was at home, but not by night in a forest."

"Bah! I never could abide a scholar. We have followed this courier to no purpose, after all. His death is no gain to us. What will our employers say on our return?"

"That we have not earned our wages, eh! L'Araignée, that's bad, too; for the courier is dead enough, and his despatches are ours."

L'Araignée made no reply to him of the lantern, but was still puzzling his brains with the despatch.

"I'll have it yet," said he; "my books will aid me."

"You will have it yet. Do so," said the unnamed of the three; "in three days give me the key that explains these ciphers. They may not mean aught that our suspicion suggests. Let the hints I give you, aid to solve the riddle. That came from the hands of Ambrose Paré. Perhaps an account of his new discoveries in chirurgery. Meet me at Tours; I have employment for you there, which will better suit your talent, than divining mysteries, or discovering plots. If you fail me there, this sword be your reward, after a fashion that will require no second thrust to pass you beyond the line of danger. If you succeed, gold, wine,

women shall be at your disposal in such quantities as must satisfy hungrier men than you. How say you ? ”

“ We accept your service,” said both ; “ you were sent with us as a companion. Can you refer us to your banker in Tours ? We received orders to go by your direction on the road to Rouen ; but excuse me, if we go into your employ, we only want to see the security for the pay. That, for the present undertaking, is satisfactory.”

This cautious inquiry was added to the acceptance of the offer by the cunning man with the lantern.

“ You will not take my word, then,” said he whom they styled the superior.

“ O, yes,” said one. “ Certainly,” the other replied, still occupied with the perplexing despatch.

“ We separate at the cross by the four corners, each by different routes for Tours. Within the year, business will call me to Rouen. By that time, if you manage to keep your heads upon your shoulders, you will know me better. Inquire for me at the Hotel de Fer — ask for Foign Blas.”

“ Are you Foign Blas ? ” stammered both, bowing low. “ The Duke de —— ”

“ Stop,” said Foign Blas ; “ no more names, — Foign Blas ! You wonder to find me in your company. No more words. Meet me at Tours ; there I may not seem as now. The task I’ve set myself is not easy to accomplish, nor can I work without tools. Are you content, or shall I give you a letter of credit.”

Both bowed their acquiescence.

“ There is a Scot in Tours, as they say among the hills, where she nestled in days of childhood, ‘ a bonny lass.’ I would wive this flower, even though

I offend good mother Church, and cause a pang to sainted Catherine, our queen of France, and arch-deceiver both in love and state affairs."

This last expression of his thoughts was in a subdued tone, evidently not intended for the ears of those who had been his comrades. He turned towards them. "L'Araignée, Condonier, leave me; and remember my eye will be ever on you. You shall have work enough, and of a kind to suit you both. L'Araignée, though often, at your vigils of deception by the midnight oil, you have filled your brain with the serpent's cunning, you see I am your master, and even at your own weapons can battle with you successfully against odds. Condonier, you that have a name which frightens children but to hear, for your cruel acts—to whom murder is a pastime, the crimes of camps your daily vocation, and whose crafty lessons were learnt in that hornet's nest of Guises that stung to death both friends and foes, your honeyed words had entrapped to ruin,—you, Condonier, have not, with this bookworm's aid, deceived Foign Blas. I know you both. You were set to watch me by that harlot queen who prostitutes to Rome both body and soul. Go, and beware you prove not false to me. Meet me at Tours; serve me faithfully: all that I have promised shall be yours. You meet me there as monks. Leave me now: at Tours—remember."

The three separated. Condonier and L'Araignée conversed in whispers as they sought the highway.

"A deep one, this duke,—eh, L'Araignée," said Condonier.

"He's a devil, to outwit Catherine," said L'Araignée. "She suspects him; she is jealous."

"Pooh ! jealous ; she's too old for that," said Condonier.

"A woman is never too old to be jealous of her lovers : at least, a French woman never is. But, come, speak low ; he may hear us." They kept on in silence.

---

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SCOTTISH NUN.

A FEW days after the murder of the courier in the forest, Ambergot arrived at Rouen, and delivered the papers to Marteau, as Pernon had requested. Those destined for the authorities of the city were safely conveyed to them. A reward was offered for the discovery of the murderers of the courier. No clew to them had, as yet, been found. Marteau in vain sought for the expected despatch from Ambrose Paré, which was in the hands of Foign Blas, though useless as an instrument of harm. It was, in truth, a roll of names, which in Paris was only seen in the places of meeting of the divisions of the confrérie. On this roll were, in concealed characters, the plans and movements for the year. Allies in England and in Scotland had been found, and many of the noble sons of Britain had pledged their honor to sustain the efforts of the league.

Douglas Glenmore was disguised in France. He had passed unknown between Paris and Rouen, and had fought with others at the siege of the latter city, and won renown under a name foreign to that

by which he was known on his native hills and heaths. At Tours he had a daughter—the joy of his widowed heart, known among the sisters as the Novice of the Golden Hair, as will be hereafter noticed when introducing another fair inmate of the establishment at Tours to the reader's acquaintance. The novices of the "Halls of Condé" (by this name was the establishment known) never took the veil. It was an institution for education principally, with the name only of a convent, which, at an earlier period, it was more properly entitled to.

The suspicion had been circulated, that the strict rules of convent life were here dispensed with, and at last had reached the Seine, and those who were dwellers upon its banks.

Foign Blas had been sent to inquire into the truth of the rumors that gave to the Halls of Condé the reputation of a Huguenot school.

The better to conceal his designs, he was accredited from the queen as a bishop in her confidence, and recommended to the superior as an especial favorite of the court, and a faithful minister of the church. His appointment, mission, and return had occupied a short time only, and Catherine congratulated him upon the success of his embassy, which was a contradiction of the rumors prejudicial to the Halls of Condé, as a community devoted to her interest and that of Rome. Thus did Foign Blas deceive the queen. For what purpose? His motives for deception may be better understood as time develops future events.

He had returned from Tours about a month previous to that day upon which the courier had been slain, and, as he had informed the companions of his



choice engaged in that murder, was now again on his way to Tours.

Repulsive as is the task, the movements of Foign Blas must be noted ; and it will be necessary to go back to his first visit to Tours, to give the reader some knowledge of a reason for this second visit. Detached reproduction of his acts may serve as well as complete description ; and a brief, dramatic style will serve better, perhaps, than the more perfect didactic.

Two days after his arrival at Tours, a scene occurred in the garden of the Halls of Condé. The actors, two ; one known to the inmates as the Bishop St. John de Lateran ; the other as Cyril Brantome, a visitor by courtesy, and an inhabitant of Rouen.

It was midnight. The bishop entered the garden hastily. Brantome had been waiting with some impatience his arrival. Brantome spoke first.

"You have not kept your word."

"I crave your pardon, sir, for causing you loss of time," said the bishop, "though it passes my comprehension to account for the need of this midnight interview."

"You have injured me."

"I know it not."

"A few words shall make it clear. It is not my habit to call hard names. I am a Scotchman."

"I have no objection to your nation, or to you. In fact, there is in the house a girl from the land of the mountains, and to her you may attribute the delay in meeting you."

"It is of her I would speak ; but dare not you to breathe her name."

"You are quick, master Scot, in speech."

"So am I in revenge for wrong. You have insulted the innocence of my child, Ellen Glenmore."

"Well, Scot, I shall not argue with you the question of insult, as do the fathers grave and knotty questions of morals. What do you wish of me?"

"Your life."

"Ah, that's the best thing I have in this world, and that which I can the least part with; so you cannot expect that I should comply with your wish, however my politeness might lead me to treat your wishes with consideration. As to the insult, I whispered into the ears of your fair daughter, if she be yours indeed, a verse or so of love, which I first read in Ovid. Will you hear it, and judge?"

"No: meet me as a man, to-morrow, armed, in fair combat. I will give you a chance for life."

"I shall be busy to-morrow, worthy Scot. I proposed an honorable alliance to the 'yellow-haired fairy.' She may yet accept, if you interfere not."

"Villain! no words."

"Ah, villain: that is because I wear a mitre at times, and a cassock at others. We need not wait till the morrow. If you are anxious to leave to my protection your blooming heather-bird, let us to-night settle the quarrel which you have begun. You have called me villain. This may be true; still it is a title not pleasing to the ears of Roland Foign Blas, when attached to his name. Draw your weapon, Scot; you see mine is out." His sword flew from its sheath.

After these interchanges of words, both stood with drawn swords in their hands. The Scot started, and

exclaimed, "Foign Blas! — well, I am ready," — and stood upon his guard.

"There is hardly the quantity of light I should prefer, if you are a swordsman," said Foign Blas. "But I must take my chance."

Their blades crossed. After a few passes, it was plain to both that the match was not unequal. Foign Blas would not risk the chances that equal combat gave. He drew from his belt a dagger, which he kept concealed, waiting an opportunity to close upon his adversary, and with the advantage of double weapons, to make a victim of a noble foe. He pressed upon the Scot, who nearly fell. At the same moment that he held aside the sword of Foign Blas with his own, to recover his position of defence, he discovered the uplifted dagger, held in the left hand of his opponent; and before he could prepare himself against the treachery, his life-blood streamed forth from a wound that reached his heart, struck by the murderous hand of Foign Blas. In a moment the Scot fell dead. He uttered no word — no groan.

Foign Blas wiped his weapon, and returned to the apartment arranged for him, and from whence he had come at the request of the Scot. In the morning, the dead body was discovered. Ellen was an orphan. Suspicion did not fall upon Foign Blas, who in a few days left the Halls of Condé, having, in the mean time, promised his protection to the one he had deprived of her natural protector, and who, strange as it may appear, looked upon him as her truest friend.

As, in the acted drama of the theatre, events pass on, while the curtain that conceals the actors is drawn upon the scene, so in real life, which it is the drama's

purpose to represent, do events pass on, as Time, with his broad hand, covers them from the view of those, who, most interested, - still least realize the march onward of this measurer of earth and earth's doings.

A shorter scene was acted at Tours, two months after the burial of the Scottish chieftain, who had fought for a land not his own, and who had found a grave, at the hands of an assassin, in the earth to the rulers of which he owed no allegiance. In that grave, and the oblivion which, to some, would be mercy, forever repose the name and fame of Douglas Glenmore.

Again is Foign Blas at Tours; with him L'Araignée and Condonier.

Two men are waiting at the garden gate, outside of which is a carriage with four horses, impatiently stamping upon the green turf beneath their feet; the bits are rattling in their foaming mouths. A man is leading a female through a path, which the shrubbery partly conceals. It is night. The man is Foign Blas; the female, the daughter of the dead Scot, now leaning in confidence upon the arm of the shedder of her father's blood.

"What have you done with my companion?" said the female.

"She has a lover: they are in the bower, by the fountain: when he is gone, she will attend you."

"Will you not tell me why this secrecy?"

"Yes, at another time. This way, my child."

L'Araignée and Condonier came forward at a signal from Foign Blas.

"Go, daughter, with these holy men."

The two, disguised as monks, gently took her by the hands.

"Do you not go with us, father?"

"No," replied Foign Blas. "In a few days I will join you, with your fair companion, whom the superior names as the Pride of the Halls of Condé."

She was handed into the carriage, upon the outside of which were soon seated L'Araignée and Condonier.

"Whither shall I drive?" said he who was acting in the capacity of coachman.

"To Rouen, to the convent of St. Jean," said Foign Blas. Take orders from L'Araignée, or Condonier, who has gold to defray the expenses of your journey. Travel only in the night. At the place of your first relay, a female will join you, who will attend upon your fair charge. No words — away."

The carriage with its prisoner departed. Hereafter the fate of the lovely Scot will be made known.

In consequence of adventures such as this, which became known as their frequency attracted attention, Catherine increased the number of the agents of her system of espionage, and directed them closely to mark the movements of Foign Blas.

Let us defer a while to inquire into their prospects of success.

Rouen now is to be the scene to which is to be transferred the subject of our interest; and time as well as space must be supposed to have passed, embracing action not in this place to be noted.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE CARPENTER.

ROUEN is memorable for its seige in 1562, at which period, the Parliament of Paris was vigorously prosecuting the quarrel with the Huguenots, on matters of faith. The history of this quarrel is not within the outline of this work.

Rouen did not take a commanding rank among the large cities of Europe in the days of the early persecutions of the Huguenots—a name obtained by a large party of Christians, who were particularly marked, by Queen Catherine de Medicis, as the victims of her pious rage.

Many distinguished citizens of Rouen became famous in the wars growing out of the policy adopted by the reigning family of France. Their acts of resistance to the oppressive edicts emanating from the Louvre are well known. Their bravery in many bloody fields has been recorded, and posterity has praised and emulated their virtues.

Among the machinery kept in motion by the wily occupant of the French throne, none was so efficient as the organized bands of spies, which were scattered over France. They, in secret characters, known only to their leaders and to the directing head, would communicate daily the minutest details of events transpiring in the families of the most prominent Huguenots.

In these families, were domiciled these spies, as domestics, or in other ways, having been received as supposed converts to the "new faith," and unfortunately, in many cases, they obtained the power to denounce their too credulous victims, who sought in vain for the traitors who had betrayed them.

There were strong-minded men in the new faith ; men who had been trained at court, and who understood well how faithless the promise that policy might make of concessions, to gain time, at which it would be convenient to break that promise with impunity, in accordance with the doctrine of expediency, which demands such dishonest and infamous abuse of power.

These men of the new faith had also established a secret brotherhood, to counteract, in part, the machinations of the court, and also to strengthen the chain which held together their own cause. By their active, though unseen exertions, they hoped to increase their own numbers, and, without the display of strength, to nurse this grand element of success, until it became concentrate power, which should enable them to grapple openly with their enemy, and present a front so formidable, that, even in that centre of pollution and tyranny, — the palace of the Louvre, — a voice might be heard of warning, that a day of retribution, so much deserved, was at hand.

It had been prophesied that the throne of kings should be burned to ashes in the streets, that royal blood should hiss in the flames kindled by the incendiary's torch, and that royal outcasts should seek shelter among their foes, in foreign lands.

Let history answer to the spirit of prophecy which reigned in centuries past, and wandering kings and princes be the witnesses of its fulfilment.

The principal director of the movements against the Huguenots, near Rouen, was Roland Foign Blas, duke de Saubigne, who had been most prominent in the sanguinary scenes of St. Bartholomew, and who, in consequence of the escape of Ambrose Paré and some of his friends, by direction of the reigning king, had ever since avowed the most uncompromising hostility to the distinguished surgeon Paré. The wary old surgeon was a match for Foign Blas. He foiled many of the deepest laid plans against his Huguenot friends, without the shadow of suspicion of interference on the part of Foign Blas.

At the head of the order of the confrérie was Ambrose Paré. The existence of the brotherhood seemed to be no matter of doubt to Catherine and her agents; but no power at their disposal could penetrate the mystery that enshrouded them; no single gathering of the confrères had ever been discovered.

It had been publicly announced that the duke de Saubigne would visit his palace at Rouen. There were many reasons given for the honor Rouen was to receive in the person of this most abandoned noble. It was to be a day of rejoicing; and as the citizens were collecting in groups, they discoursed of the great occasion.

Three days previous to the time at which these events occurred, an agent of the duke's, a monk, had



arrived to arrange the palace in a style worthy the reception of its owner.

There had long been a dispute between the family of De Saubigne and one of the family of De Ligne, about the boundaries of some land, through which the Street of the Martyrs had been laid out, passing near the ducal palace.

Upon part of this disputed territory, within a few years, a mechanic, acting by direction of the elder De Ligne, had built a house and workshop, close to the palace, and nailed a sign over the door — "Marteau, Carpenter." This had come to the knowledge of Foign Blas, who had used threats and promises in vain to persuade the occupant to remove his workshop from its proximity to the palace. The sturdy mechanic still remained. One of the duke's motives in visiting Rouen was said to be a determination to drive the carpenter from the city.

The monk alluded to had several interviews with •Marteau, as did several of the officers of Foign Blas, within the last three days. He still used the axe and the saw, and threatened the life of whoever should attempt to force him from his privilege to labor at his craft, even at the threshold of a palace.

The morning of the seventeenth of August, 1582, was not made joyous by the sun, whose presence seems to make glad all things that delight in day. The Square of the Martyrs, though not in the centre of the city, still partook of the bustle of the day, at an earlier hour than some more popular places of thoroughfare and resort. In this square had fallen the early victims of persecution; in

this square had the battalions of Catherine wheeled in triumph, after spilling the blood of women and children; and in this square, too, had they felt the force of men fighting in a just cause, and laid down their weapons ingloriously to citizen soldiery, led to confront and vanquish them by the brave artisan, Michael de Ligne.

The most prominent object in the square was the ducal palace, of a mixed architecture, combining the solidity of the Gothic with part of the finish, which may be seen in the Italian alterations, at this time so frequently introduced. It consisted of a main building and two wings, which were surmounted by towers. Marble steps led to the entrance in front. Statues of high execution occupied pedestals at either extremity of the portico. Opposite stood the humble dwelling of Marteau, a part of which was used as a workshop.

In the centre of the square, upon a rough pedestal, was a cross. An enclosed space marked the boundary of the square on the east. Through the foliage of the fine trees which encircled the enclosure could be seen the turrets of a large building, situated on an elevation, at a quarter of a mile distant from the square. This was the convent of St. Jean. In one of its towers was a large bell. Its deep tones gave out the matin peal, and the people of Rouen were now hastening to their devotional duty at their different shrines of worship. A group are now assembled at the cross. From their conversation, the temper of the citizens of their class may be known.

The roofs of the houses in Rouen covered the

true feelings of the inmates. There were two great parties in the city — those of the church, and those who in heart, if not in act, were devoted to the Huguenot cause. There were other parties, insignificant in numbers, it is true, yet distrusted by both of the great divisions, as unworthy of confidence.

Individual grumblers were in abundance, and their expressed opinions changed as often as the hours.

Standing at the cross, at this time, was one Pierre Gronder, a dealer in provisions, whose fame, as a maker of sausages, gives him claim to the title of eminent.

The woman at his side has been known for twenty years as the wife of Pierre Gronder. The peculiar expression of her face is to be attributed to the constant turning up of her nose in contempt at the wives of less distinguished mincers of meat in Rouen, whose attempts at grandeur she always frowned down with becoming dignity.

The third personage of the group is their nephew. Not having, during their married life, been blessed with offspring, Nykin le Lippe was adopted from the flock, whose dam was sister to Pierre Gronder's wife, and married to Nicholas le Lippe, who rejoiced in being the father of Nykin, and a dozen of brothers and sisters, with the same family likeness and pretensions.

"Husband," said Mrs. Gronder, "don't hurry me. I like to go to mass; 'tis my duty as a Christian; but you will go so early that nobody can see us."

"I don't go to be seen," said Gronder. "I go for the good I receive from Father Simon's instruction."

If I go early, and get back early, my shop is opened for customers before the lazy ones, who wait for the last mass."

"Nykin, come with me. Leave your uncle to his whims," said Madame Gronder, with the usual sign of contempt, a toss of the head.

Nykin was about to follow his aunt. He rubbed his eyes, and was endeavoring to prevent the continual gaping which troubled him, caused by his early rising.

"Go with your aunt, Nykin; go, my boy. And, wife, don't look behind you. Remember the fate of Lot's wife."

"Ah, Gronder, you are a heretic. Wait till the duke comes. He'll put a stop to your doings. Things are coming to a fine pass in Rouen — carpenters and masons keeping company with lords, and getting up a religion to put all on terms of equality. If I had my way, there should be no such thing as equality in the world."

"So the duke is coming, is he? I shall serve his table with fresh meats. By the way, Nykin, have you heard any more of the girl that was carried away?"

"No, sir," said Nykin, with a long gape. "Folks don't believe it."

"Mr. Gronder, do you hear the bell?"

"Yes. Your arm, my dear; we'll talk as we go along."

Arm in arm they left the square, their voices heard in argument for some time. Gronder and his wife agreed in few things, but the important point of

disagreement was the religious question of the day. Gronder gave signs of joining the Huguenot party.

Nykin followed them to church, doubting in his mind, that an early mass was better than a nap at the matin hour.

Occasional groups would gather near the cross. Some of the individuals composing them dropped upon their knees, repeating an ave, or a confiteor, and then passed on. Others merely bowed in reverence to this memento of Calvary, or passed along without noticing the emblem of a crucified God. From their acts, it was difficult to decide which was the true Catholic or the heretic at this time. All feared the spies of Paris, when in public. A prison or a gibbet was always ready for a victim, and the denounced one had little chance of escape, whatever his rank or condition. Again the square was as silent as if it had been a desert. All had passed on.

Of a sudden, from the pedestal in the square appeared a figure in the habiliments of a monk. Was he a spy? Had this been a place of concealment, where, unseen, he might hear the citizens speak their free thoughts to each other in fancied security? No. What then? The monk's eye first falls upon the workshop of Marteau. It is yet unopened: the door and shutters are closed.

"That hovel, so near the palace, would seem to dispute the power of the duke. It must down. The insolent mechanic shall no longer defy church and state." Thus spoke the monk; and with threatening action he seemed to convey a determination to consummate his threat. His steps toward

the palace were slow and measured, and he appeared to watch narrowly all the avenues leading to the square. It was evident, from his manner, that he did not wish to be seen entering the palace. He returned to the pedestal, and, while engaged at one of its panels, the door of Marteau's shop opened—the carpenter himself stood at the threshold. The monk fell upon his knees, in attitude of prayer, with his arms folded across his breast.

There was something striking in the attitude of Marteau. He was about forty years of age; dressed humbly, as an artisan of the time; of athletic form, and most commanding aspect. His eyes were fixed upon the monk. He was the first to speak.

“Good day, monk,” was his salutation.

“Be silent, son, until my prayer is finished, and I have said amen,” was the monk's response, who continued, though in inaudible tones, his prayer.

The carpenter stepped from his door, speaking as he descended: “Be silent! Not I, monk. When I pray, it is beneath my own roof, not in the streets. I reverence the true worshipper, and despise the hypocrite. Say you amen when you will, I shall speak, and go on with my daily duty.” Thus replying, he removed a bolt, which confined a kind of sliding door. This having been pushed aside, displayed the interior of his workshop. Patterns and models were upon the wall. His bench and tools, newly planed boards, and other utensils of the trade, lay around. Upon the floor rested an unfinished coffin, the last piece of work upon which he had been engaged. During this action of the carpenter, the monk had kept on his knees, apparently in deep devo-

tion, repeating aloud the words, "in Spiritu Sanctu. Amen." He arose, making, as usual, the sign of the cross. Then, meeting Marteau, he said, "Now, son, what say you?"

"Nothing, monk. I go to my daily toil, you to yours. If your task is good, Heaven prosper you."

"Stay, carpenter." The monk laid his hand gently upon the shoulder of Marteau, who was returning to his shop.

"I cannot stay at thy bidding, monk. What will thy words profit me? If I stand talking here, my tools are idle with me."

"It may profit thee to heed my words."

"Speak them quickly, that I may be the judge."

"You are alone, without family."

"I am. There's no profit in words like these — you tell me what none should know so well as I."

"I questioned you, then," said the monk, "not knowing you was so precise. The duke, your neighbor, will soon return to Rouen."

"So I have heard."

"You have had conferences with his agents. He wishes you to remove your shop from this square; and though upon his land, you have been offered gold to remove."

"True, that I have heard his wishes; untrue, that I am upon his land. True, I have been offered gold, and have refused it. No bargain can be made to pull down the only roof that shelters me. The job's a bad one. I shall not stir. The duke, when he comes, shall hear my hammer and my saw. Still, if he likes not the sound, there is a way to avoid it."

"And what is that way?" eagerly inquired the monk.

"The duke can remove his palace from the square," said Marteau, with a smile. "He has my consent."

"Such words, if known, son, would wake his wrath."

"Well, let it wake. I care not: it will to sleep again."

"You know his power in Rouen is great. Force is at his command sufficient to compel you to obedience. The church's servants desire peace and good will between the great and humble."

Marteau seemed to express his thoughts in half uttered words, which did not reach the ear of the monk, who repeated more strongly the implied threat, in order, if possible, to compel an answer.

"Force," "war," "a knight," and "a mechanic," in disconnected utterance, again fell from the lips of the carpenter, who ended with a laugh, still suppressed, though evidently intended as a defiance.

"You do not fear the duke, his friends, and their influence, then?" said the monk.

"Friends!—creatures, slaves. No; the feeling that the word *fear* stands for has no place in the counsels of my thought. Hark ye, monk: ere I begin my work, that dwelling's mine. If you are a stranger in Rouen, know the truth from lips that speak no falsehood: that dwelling's mine; built by these hands, upon land given for my use, by one against whose title there is no living doubt. At that bench, by my daily toil, do I earn my daily bread. Let one of the minions of the duke impede me in my work,



and of the tools of my craft will I make the weapons of defence. That is my palace, my castle ; and until the timbers with which 'tis framed fall around me, or this arm, this toil-nerved arm, can lift an axe no more, woe to the aggressor who assails it : his blood be upon his own head. So say to the duke, if you are one of his messengers ; I will meet his force with force. Marteau, the carpenter, upon his own ground and hearth-stone, defies the duke Foign Blas ; he defies the proud De Saubigne."

"Your mind will change, son, I hope."

"Never, father, until it changes bodies."

For the first time, the monk discovered the coffin in the workshop. For a moment, it started him. He speedily regained his composure, and, with his usual mild tones of voice, he inquired of Marteau for whom he made that coffin. The carpenter's reply was prompt. In a tone of thunder, which again startled the monk, he exclaimed, —

"A villain ! — one who has all his life trod the floors of palaces, and never yet entered the dwelling of poverty, but to destroy ; one whose heart is evil in all its actions. Companion of kings and princes, associated with thrones and crowns, this is thy resting-place, when the day of vengeance comes."

"At whose bidding make you this coffin, carpenter?" said the monk.

"Interpret my dream, and I will answer."

"'Tis not in my office to interpret dreams : they are of the evil spirit : heed them not."

"I believe it. Mine was from an evil spirit ; I dreamed of the duke Foign Blas."

"Then I will hear it — 'deliver us from evil' — go on, son. I may not interpret, but I will listen."

Marteau approached him. "Thus it was. There was a day of pomp, of triumph, of rejoicing; 'twas the anniversary of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Banners floated in the breeze; the plumed warrior on his battle steed, the lady fair in chariot and in car with the courtier and the prince, swelled the train that the city rabble followed with their shouts, eager to view this pageant of an hour. 'Twas like other fête days that have come and passed in France between a rising and a setting sun; shrewd devices made to blind the dim-visioned slaves of kings, that the fetters may be closer fitted to their limbs, even while their breath fills the free air which is denied them by the tyrant for whom the welcome shout is raised. While thus the city was engaged, the carpenter was at work—I, Marteau. The gay music of the princely bands struck upon my ear—a march of triumph; but it seemed to me a dirge. Each note of joy became a wail for the slaughtered victims of Bartholomew. The loudest shout of all had scarcely died away, when a voice said, 'Carpenter, build a gibbet and a coffin for the heir of old Foign Blas; death by the rope is his doom.' I obeyed the voice. On yonder bench you see the coffin; 'twill soon be completed, and in my yard the gibbet is framed and ready."

During the recital, the monk writhed with concealed and conflicting passions. His eye flashed furiously at times, and a desperate struggle was evident between his wishes and his acts. He could restrain himself no longer.

"Traitor, Huguenot, mechanic ! What means this hellish insult to the duke ? "

"I did but relate a dream, monk — only a dream."

The monk recovered a little from the effects of his suppressed, yet burning rage.

"The coffin is no dream, for there it is ; and the gibbet timbers are before my eyes. The devil hath entered thee."

"No, monk, no devil. If Foign Blas fears my dream, let him keep from Rouen."

"Remove from the square ; the duke shall never know from me what you have disclosed. Destroy the coffin and the gibbet, and forget the hour you constructed them."

"No ; I do not fear my enemy. The coffin will be finished to-morrow."

"And to-morrow the duke may arrive. He expects to see your hovel levelled with the earth. I warn you, — and farewell."

The monk ascended the steps of the palace : a lackey opened the door. The monk disappeared.

The carpenter removed from his vest a letter, which, after reading, he kissed affectionately, and replaced it near his bosom. He exclaimed, as he wiped away a tear, "My child, my child, thine hour of trial is to come. Heaven grant thee strength to bear it, and to triumph."

## CHAPTER IV.

## MADELON.

Two principal characters have been introduced to the reader's notice, supported only by a few subordinate actors, who are at present of but little apparent consequence. Upon these pages are to be traced the lineaments of characters who contributed towards a grand result. The public interest is to be here considered, less than the private fulfilment of the designs of some who deserved well for their zeal and enterprise for the general good.

The Surgeon of Paris is an episode, having for its purpose to fix the mind upon the worthy deeds of Ambrose Paré, preceding and about the time of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Events which transpired during those days of blood, give origin to the purposes of the carpenter of Rouen, and their fulfilment forms naturally a connection between the two works. The duke de Saubigne, now Foign Blas, gained his first laurels under Catherine. Her son, Charles IX., then reigning king, was killed by a slow poison, administered by his mother's hand. The Huguenots were not now in the same condition, in all respects, as at that time; and with them, as a body, this narrative has little to do. But as events progress, it will be seen, that however the quarrel, which forms the central point of interest, may be of a private nature, it began in affairs of state, arising from the policy of the overbearing, deceitful Catherine;

and retributive justice, after a lapse of years, claimed the punishment of these public murderers, though at the suit of private injury, and sustained by private means. With this slight recurrence to the past, we ask the attention of the reader, to go back some time from the seventeenth of August, 1582.

We did not, in a previous chapter, particularly describe the convent of Tours, which is near Versailles. To know the extent of the city, the number of its inhabitants, its trade, or its revenue, statistic tables may be consulted, where these matters are duly recorded. With one or more of its inhabitants, at this time, it is desirable to be acquainted, though their actions had not been considered of sufficient importance to entitle them to a place in those precise volumes known as Historical Collections. In the rear of the convent is a magnificent garden, the resort of such of the residents at the convent who were placed there to receive an education appropriate to their conditions, and with no intention to become sisters of the order who control its internal police. Among all the pupils at Tours, none could excel Madelon de Ligne, for beauty of mind, vigor of intellect, or personal charms. A description of the elements which made her a superior combination of human perfections may be dispensed with; let her be judged by acts. Perceive, if you can, through them, the strength of her mind; which, though directing the actions of a perfect form, and illumining a face of most exquisite arrangement of features, might have animated a less symmetrical piece of clay, and thus have had equal claim upon the regard of those who rank intellect above personal beauty. The color of her eyes and

hair; the contour of her forehead and brows; the curve of her lips, or the texture of the skin, might serve as arguments, if known, to sustain that philosophy which pretends to give amiability, modesty, virtue, and other good qualities, in a greater or lesser degree, to the individual whose eyes or hair may approach or recede from the standard by which it selects the excellent of the earth, the noble-born of nature. Take the general acknowledgment of the lady superior and her colleagues, that Madelon de Ligne was beautiful, for granted; believe the universal voice of her associates to admit her as their superior in personal charms; to which add, that whenever she was seen in the streets of Versailles, she was pointed out by hundreds of either sex as the beautiful Madelon,—in a city famed for the elegance of its ladies,—and then, if any doubt her claims to a heroine's excellence, wait with patience for further proof, and it will in good time appear.

Let us touch briefly upon a part of her history.

Her mother was one of the victims of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Foign Blas had attempted an abduction, while her husband, a famous Huguenot leader, lay in irons in the Bastile. This failure incensed him to that degree, that he determined, should they meet again, he would take her life; which determination was carried into effect on the last day of the massacre. Madelon was in her arms, and escaped the murderous bullets of the assassins. The father reached the scene of blood too late to save the mother, but in time to receive from her lips the murderer's name, and to preserve Madelon, his child; then eight years of age.

The unsettled state of the times compelled him to intrust the care and education of his only daughter to the sisters of the convent of Tours, a Catholic community in appearance, but pledged to the new faith doctrines, and discreetly using all means to forward its influences and its interests. Since the day of her entrance into the convent, she had not beheld her father's face. They had corresponded when she became of a proper age; and his letters were anxiously waited for and warmly welcomed when they arrived. He often spoke to her of a home that should one day be hers, and bade her heed well the lessons of instruction which her superior should select, as peculiarly adapted to her situation at the time, and to prepare her for the future.

One sentiment of love had never intruded itself in any of the letters written by the father to his child. He had often thought of the power of that passion, and its influence for good or ill on her life. He had his wishes, but they were unknown to her. He could have informed her on whom his choice would fall, when the time should come to transfer her to a husband's care. But he preferred that from her lips the first words of love should come. There was a youth worthy of her; his father and the father of Madelon, had exchanged their thoughts freely upon the subject, but the children had neither of them been admitted to the secrets of their parents' councils.

They had resolved to trust to time; the time had nearly arrived. A youth was despatched from Paris to Rouen, by one who had the welfare of Marteau at heart. More than a year had elapsed since Madelon had received a letter from her father. She

dared not write to him, for a cause ; she was instructed by him never to do so, as his whereabouts might thus be betrayed. Her letters were always sent to the care of Marteau, at Rouen. Much had happened within that year. A great part of the time she had been secluded from the world, while those outside of the convent walls sought for the reason in vain.

She dreaded now, what for years she had looked for with delight, the day when her father should send for her to Rouen. Still she had done no wrong. The day and the letter came. The letter was brief and kind. Should she obey it? "What will he say when I am gone?" said she, after reading her father's letter. "I dread to meet my father, for I have deceived him." What! the beautiful, the pure, deceive? Yes. She had followed the impulses of her heart. She did not question the probabilities of her father's objection until too late. There was a hint, in the last letter from her father, that he had selected a husband for her; and that hint had awakened emotions not to be controlled. She must prepare for her departure, and the one who had caused the ills which she had anticipated, the secret keeper of her heart's affections, had urged her, for his sake, to conceal for the present the promises and vows which he had made, and which she had received. But a few days had elapsed since a young man left the convent at Tours for Paris. At his parting with Madelon in the garden of the convent, he assured her that neither time nor circumstances should alter his affection for her. He also informed her that it was his intention to enter public life, and devote his whole mind to the cause of freedom, aided



by his best energies and strength; and if the needful hour come, his life should also be sacrificed upon the altar of his country. It would not be proper at this time to reveal all the incidents of the last prolonged interview in the convent garden bower. The parting moment came, and Madelon was alone. The next event was her father's summons to Rouen, before adverted to.

We pass the parting scenes in the convent — the weeping sisters, the affectionate superior's tender advice and farewell, the abrupt but honest good-by of the porter, and the gardener, who had culled the choicest flowers, and placed them on her table, with his regards. Not a dry eye was in the hall when the coach drove up to the door, in which she was to leave what had been her home. An hour had passed; she was on the road, her mind active and restless. How would her father look? What would her father say? A thousand thoughts, which she should have entertained in the past, now claimed her attention, as having important bearing upon the future. Another hour and another rolled by, each one finding her nearer to the one she dreaded to meet, and farther from the one she loved.

In this connection, the reader may be reminded that the companion of the Scottish nun, and she who was styled the "Pride of the Halls of Condé," is none other than Madelon de Ligne: the words of Foign Blas, in the garden, on the night of the abduction of the Scottish nun, that "Madelon and her lover were then in the bower near the fountain," were true.

Her last words to that lover were, "Farewell, Antoine."

## CHAPTER V.

## ANTOINE.

WHEN the monk entered the ducal palace, Marteau retired to his shop ; and from a box, which opened by a secret spring, he removed a package, counting two or three times the contents, which seemed to be sheets of parchment, of different colors, and from which hung seals of different sizes and shapes. "They are right," said he : he replaced them. "The green — the blue — the red, — right."

"Did I endanger the cause by my free speech to the monk? No, no. I will complete the coffin." Thus spoke Marteau, and he began to adjust the cover to this last tenement of man—the narrow chamber designed to protect from the worms of earth the body which, perhaps, in life, had found kingdoms too small to control its action. Man dead, though a king in life, is but earth.

What a power over the will does habit give to some, the sight of the only piece of furniture required in the "narrow house," would conjure up fearful thoughts of eternity and the rapidity of time. The carpenter cut the wood for this coffin as if it had been part of the furniture for a bridal equipment, instead of the paraphernalia of the grave.

At this moment, there appeared in the square a young man of noble bearing. Beneath the ample folds of his cloak might be seen the glittering embroidery of his vest. He wore a doublet, trunk, and

hose, of the same blue color, trimmed with gold buttons, and tastily relieved by straps and slashes of red velvet, of the finest pile. Booted, spurred, and armed, he seemed no ordinary cavalier; yet his youthful appearance and scarless face gave him no claim to the honors of war, though his eagle eye told of the qualifications for battle, should an occasion call, which were at his command. In his hand he held a descriptive drawing of the square. He advanced to the centre, and appeared to be comparing the drawing with the actual view of the place.

"Let me see,"—reading as he spoke,—"this must be the square. The workshop of Marteau, carpenter, near the palace. There are the ducal arms, and here the cross. I cannot be mistaken. No; for there, in plain letters, I may read Marteau." He had discovered the sign over the door, and also had noticed Marteau himself busy at his work. He stood at the door. "Ho! there, carpenter! a word with you."

Marteau looked up; then continued his work, speaking in reply at the same time, "What would you, sir, with me?"

"Are you called Marteau?"

"That is my name in Rouen. What would you with Marteau?"

The young man handed him a sealed packet. "That, I have no doubt, will make known my errand here."

The carpenter walked from his shop into the square to receive the packet, which he opened and read, occasionally glancing at the young man, who stood in an easy attitude at his side. Having finished

reading the contents of the packet, he said, "Young man, I welcome you to Rouen. When did you leave Paris?"

"A week since."

"Too long on the road, sir. I expected you at an earlier day."

"Be sure no trifle detained me. I sought a friend at Versailles—a dear friend. My friendships are lasting, and the importance of my visit must excuse my delay."

"Well; we shall see. Your father sends you here to obey my instructions. Is it not so?"

"I am here in obedience to his commands. If I fail to secure your confidence, he will own me no longer for a son."

"And do you, without hesitation, engage to confide in me and trust to my guidance?"

"I do."

"You have pride?"

"My proper share."

"Go into my shop. Pass through that narrow door. You will find a workman's dress, an apron, and a rule. I will teach you to handle the implements of my trade, when your habits are in keeping with your tasks. Go in."

The young man hesitated.

"Carpenter, I abjure all mummery. My companions are the sons of noblemen; my father holds high place at court; and shall I descend—"

"Descend!" interrupted Marteau. "Descend! Your father is my friend. Am not I an artisan? or—as you court flies would term me—a base mechanic? Did you not come here to do my will?"

Here," — he placed the packet in his hand, — "read your father's warrant for my acts."

The young man read the paper, and handed it back to the carpenter.

"I would know the purpose?"

"In time you will. You cannot secure my confidence in any other way."

"For good reason, I might assent."

"You must without; else, return to Paris. Your father will know my reasons before you meet him."

"I feel that I may trust you with my life; but why this baseness —?"

"Stop, young man; I ask you to become one of an honest craft; there is no baseness in honest labor. Your frame's a manly one; well knit your joints; there's vigor in your step. You are the pattern for a mechanic. Lords look not like you. Doff those glittering symbols of a court; they do not fit you; they hide the proper proportions of a man fit for toil. Besides, you have a soul: would you suffer a wrong from one whose gayly trimmed doublet was his safeguard only, because you wore serge?"

"I would suffer wrong from no man, of high or low degree."

"Will you wear the workman's dress, and labor in my shop, and defend that shop from assault as you would me?"

"I will."

"Listen to me. De Saubigne, your father's foe and mine, — the foe to all that's right, and friend to all that's wrong, — is near Rouen. Despite his spies, there is a Huguenot league, formed to sustain the cause of right. The secret order of the confrères have

meetings in every town. Among its ranks will be found illustrious names, who will live to restore freedom of thought to France. No man may join the league who is not of some mechanic craft. To aid such a cause, have you the heart ? ”

The young man listened with attention, and replied firmly, —

“ I have the heart : do with me as you will.”

“ I hope you will prove true. Young man, that humble workshop has been the frequent scene of glorious deeds. Men have in it made a compact, their lives the pledges of its fulfilment. Such men will be your companions. In times in which thrones are tottering, and crowns are the stakes which conflicts are to decide between the people and their wrongers, a place like that,” he pointed to his workshop, “ is freedom’s cradle ; there is it nursed, there it thrives, there is it protected. Whence issues the mandate that a people shall be free ? Not from the palace, but the place of labor ; not from the mouths of the pampered lords of the court, but from the representative head of the race of nature’s noblemen — the mechanic.”

The young man warmed at the energy which Marteau threw into his expressions of the people’s power. He tendered him his hand.

“ Heart and soul, I am yours and the confrères’. Whatever my task, the knowledge that it is duty shall insure its completion.”

“ Think well, young man. Step by step you will learn all that is good for you to know. Let not the restless spirit of youth misguide you. Temper your doings with judgment. Let not the mystery that

envelops my acts cause in you distrust, though it should be my hard duty to pronounce on you the doom of death. Trust me. Enter on your work, change your dress; then study well what here you read." He handed him a leaf from a book. "There you have written the first lesson of our order. You are one of us. Swear to me, by the hope you have of heaven, never to betray what there you learn."

"I swear by my hopes of heaven."

The young man received the mystic leaf, pronouncing the words of his oath in a manly tone.

"Give me now your hand," said Marteau; "the grip of a confrère is in it. No true hand but in this grip will always find a brother out." They held each other a moment by the grip. "Now," continued Marteau, "you are my apprentice; go in, and let your dress bespeak your way of life."

The young man disappeared. The carpenter was again alone. The receiving of a confrère was after the fashion we have seen. In the open streets or field, or before a shop devoted to a mechanic's work the candidate met some brother of the order, of high rank, and thus became an apprentice to his trade. This was but a form, and part of the mystic work; and the nobleman who would join the band of confrères must, as a first step, descend the level at which all enter the portals leading to the conclaves of the order.

Some of the ordeals of initiation were severe; and if a brother should be suspected in the least of wavering, a severer form of trial was proposed, which none but the truest could withstand. High in the

order was Marteau; higher still was AMBROSE PARÉ, the surgeon of Paris, without rival in his art. By his advice came the young man from Paris, who, as we have seen, is to pass through the degrees which may lead him to a place of rank among the confrères.

The streets had now more of the appearance of city life. Citizens were passing to and fro; the merry laugh of youth, the staid look of a riper age, the mark of woe, which veils the true impress of divinity stamped upon the face of man, mingled with the crowd, and passed on. All talked of the expected coming of the duke — some with delight; some with doubt; some with execrations and threats. The work of the world went on. In some houses a new-born infant's cry was heard, just entering the life that is so short. At another place, an old man had just breathed his last, finishing in peace his part of life's duty, which the new-born is sent to continue and fulfil. The circle of living nature still revolves. Mysterious revolution! — problem which man's mind in vain attempts to solve.

The carpenter had been measuring the space of ground upon which had been erected the cross, nearly in the centre of the square. While engaged in some calculation, a man, splendidly dressed, appeared upon the steps of the palace, and in a second or two descended to the street, and stood near Marteau.

"Carpenter," said he, "let me pass."

"Go on," was the quiet reply of Marteau, who still continued his calculations.

"Why stop my way, then?" said the other.

"There is room before me or behind me: pass on."

"You obstruct a public square, carpenter."



"Are you a stranger in Rouen? If so, I pardon your ignorance of my claim. This square is not public; it's mine—four feet to the south of the cross, and twenty to the east from the line of my shop. It was loaned, not given for the public use. I shall enclose it in a fence, and keep it for private purposes, and thus end forever all disputes. Still you can pass on. If you are a stranger, I would not disturb you, though you cross my land."

"You do not claim that cross?"

"No. The duke de Saubigne placed it there, I hear. Let the duke remove it."

"I question if the duke will permit its removal or enclosure."

"I shall not ask leave of his grace. It is on my land, and he knows the law. My claim is good."

"I hear he has proposed to purchase all your rights in and about the square. Is it so?"

"He never offered face to face with me for my land. He has employed agents. I deal only with the principal. When we meet, I make no doubt all our affairs not yet settled will be promptly adjusted."

"Why not treat with his agents?"

"They deal in words. Words are but modelled air. They leave impressions upon the ear, then mingle with the air from which they sprung; when sought for again, at need, the words have taken another shape, or cannot be found at all. The words of agents are not substances to buy disputed lands."

"You are sagacious, quite, for one of your class, carpenter."

"For one of my class, — no doubt. I accept the

compliment, sir, — from one of your class ; — and what the class is, I may guess in vain."

The bell of a neighboring church announced the hour of six. Marteau hastily left the street, entered his shop, exchanged a few words with his new apprentice, and with hurried steps crossed the square, and was soon out of sight.

The duke remained ; — for it was Foign Blas himself, who had just come out from the palace. He had entered it, in the garb of the monk, but a short time previous. Thus twice had Marteau been near to his greatest enemy without the knowledge of the fact. Foign Blas was a wily foe — a creature of disguises, plots, and intrigues ; it was plain to him, from his first rencontre with Marteau, that he had an opponent of no ordinary kind to deal with ; though why the carpenter should evince such hate for him, yet not recognize him, was a secret he could not divine. His enemies were numerous, yet not so numerous as the old wrongs he had inflicted upon his fellow-men ; and those wrongs were not retained, to burden his memory ; new ones daily taking their place, of increased enormity and magnitude.

Just at this moment, he was in doubt how to proceed. The weight of his vengeance must fall upon the carpenter, though, until his presence in Rouen had been officially proclaimed, he deemed it not prudent to strike. He had no doubt about the carpenter's claim to the land upon which stood the cross ; but if the judges of the court were the kind of men he deemed them, Marteau's rights would not be sustained.

There was a secret connected with that cross, unknown to Marteau, unknown to living being,

save Foign Blas. By a passage under ground, that pedestal formed a communication from the square to the vaults of the Convent of St. Jean, which was one of the secret rendezvous for spies employed by Catharine de Medicis, — its inmates and visitors the most abandoned characters which could be collected from the sinks of iniquity with which Paris was said to abound. Murders, debaucheries, wild orgies, and Bacchanlian revels, were the constant business and amusement of the pretended monks and nuns who were the dwellers within its walls. During the day they were employed in the city, visiting the sick, burying the dead, engaged in objects of charity, with assumed sanctity, or saying masses for the repose of the souls of those who had been ravished and murdered in their den, then cast forth to be discovered by their friends, who, in the performance of the last offices of religion, were assisted by the monks of St. Jean, with all the semblance of pious fathers of the church. In this nursery of crime, Foign Blas had passed the night; thither might be conveyed the daughter of any citizen of Rouen, whose beauty or charms should awaken the passion of the duke; and vain the search for the lost one, when once within his power. The history of St. Jean involved the fate of many, whose sudden disappearance from their homes remains a mystery to this hour.

Foign Blas had far-reaching views. Despite his power, he was aware that a time might come that a retreat to St. Jean would be his only safety; and should a revolutionay force invest it to destroy, safe under ground he might remain, while his villanous

retainers should meet the just reward of all their evil deeds. To him, then, this secret passage might be worth the price of his existence, if there is a price to life.

One thing he had resolved, — to hang Marteau upon the gibbet framed for himself, if he could find pretence to fasten upon him a crime, and yield him to the law. "To resist the enclosure of the cross will be the surest way. This will tempt Marteau to kill some worthless servant in the affray, who shall be set to tear down the enclosure which the carpenter will erect."

Thus said Foign Blas, as he called a trusty friend, Lournay, from the palace, who at the call appeared.

"What says my most gracious duke?" Lournay bowed low, as he spoke.

"How do you report, Lournay?" inquired Foign Blas.

"Nothing wrong. I have taken especial care to cover all your movements; no one suspects your grace. Within three days you are expected, and many anxious to see your grace, have already started to meet you on the road from Havre."

"Here are citizens: do you know that party?" The duke pointed out Gronder, his wife, and nephew, who were now returning from mass.

Lournay did not recognize them at first. "I do not know them," said he, "but I am sure they are not of the party against us. My agents have marked all from whom we may expect opposition."

"Do you hear more of the secret band of traitors said to gather here in Rouen?"

"No word. From among the best informed of the

citizens, I learn that the 'secret order' exists but in the imagination of some few."

"Let us stand aside while these pass on."

The duke and Lournay retired behind the cross. Gronder, his wife, and nephew walked slowly along.

Gronder was disputing with his wife, as usual; and the subject was of no seeming importance; yet had it brought the color to the cheek of Madame Gronder, in excess; and this color had so diffused itself, as to tint her nose till it more resembled the comb of the cock, than the prominent member of a female face.

"I say eggs for breakfast, Madame Gronder, and that's enough," said he. The dispute had been about eggs.

"Well, well," Madame Gronder replied, "cook cocks, hens, eggs, and all, if you will; but I think you had better save them for the coming of the duke. It would be no small honor to supply the palace with luxuries; and our neighbor, Grillon, would feel as if we were somebody, I think."

"In the matter of eggs, — myself before the duke," said Gronder. "Nykin, you can wait now for Marteau, if he is not at home, and attend to his directions."

"Yes, uncle," said Nykin, who appeared to be delighted to be left behind, as handling the tools in Marteau's shop he considered one of the essentials of his daily happiness.

Gronder and his wife departed. The eggs continued to be the argument, until their voices were lost in the bustle of another street leading from the square. The smart crack of a heavy whip was heard, and shortly after there drove into the square a travelling carriage and four horses.

The movement had been watched by the duke and Lournay. The coachman reined up his horses, and, spying Nykin at the door of Marteau's shop, he called him.

"You want me to hold your horses?" said Nykin.

"No; but tell me, boy, where's the house of Marteau?"

"Right before you," said Nykin. "Why, how happens it you did not know; I thought a coachman knew every thing, and where every body lives."

"I am not on my own route," said the driver. He jumped from the box, and opened the door of the carriage, informing the passenger, who was a lady, that she had arrived at her destination.

"Young man, show the lady the way, while I attend to the trunks," said the coachman.

A lady in a gray travelling habit descended from the coach. A drab hat and feathers covered her head, and her face was partly concealed by a black veil. She had in her arms an infant.

The duke still observed all that was passing, though he himself remained concealed.

Nykin seemed delighted with the infant. "Ma'am, do let me hold the baby for you."

"No, I thank you, young man." The driver was occupied in taking the trunks from the carriage. "You can oblige me by giving this to the coachman," — she handed him some pieces of gold, — "and there is a livre; you can keep that for yourself."

Nykin took the money, as directed, and gave it to the coachman, who, after pocketing the gold, and adjusting some little errors about his harness, mounted the box and drove off.

Nykin returned to the lady. "Now, young man, lead the way." She was advancing towards the palace.

"You don't go that way, if you please, ma'am, but through this shop, where the coffin is."

"But are you sure there is no mistake?"

She turned aside her veil, and presented, though unintentionally, her beautiful face to the gaze of the duke de Saubigne. He seemed struck either with her personal beauty, or the recognition of a likeness to another, who, in other days, had occupied his mind. She cast her eyes about the square, as if to be satisfied of her doubts.

"Who dwells in that place?" said she, pointing to the workshop.

"Marteau, the carpenter, the coffin-maker," said Nykin.

The duke had despatched Lournay hastily to the interior of the palace, and was advancing to a nearer position to the lady.

"And who dwells there, young man?" said the lady, pointing to the palace.

The duke advanced. "One, lady, who knows the hospitality due to a stranger. It appears you are in doubt as to the dwelling that is to receive you. Have you journeyed far?"

"Only from Versailles, sir. My direction is simply, 'House opposite the cross, in the Square of the Martyrs.' I expected a friend here to receive me."

The duke thought her beautiful. Already had he conceived a plan to prevent her reaching any home but the Convent of St. Jean. She might be the daughter or wife of a citizen or a noble. He cared

not. He would not appear too curious or interested, and therefore did not inquire her name. But once within the walls of the palace, he would know if it was an accidental likeness in a stranger's features that revived so suddenly the past. Madelon had been talking with Nykin, who had failed to persuade her that Marteau's shop was her home.

The duke took advantage of her moments of irresolution. "Madame, allow me to call my servants, and have your baggage conveyed in. You can remain until your friend, whom you expect, arrives, and then he will conduct you to appropriate lodgings."

"I thank you, sir."

Antoine, by this time, had changed his dress, and appeared in the shop, as he had been directed. The eye of the lady met his.

"What man is that?" said she. "Is that the owner of the house? Is that the carpenter, Marteau?" She came near fainting, and sat down upon the side of the pedestal. The duke regretted this delay, yet he dared not urge her entrance into his palace. He was at her side. He removed her veil to give the air free access to her face. But the appearance of Antoine had so bewildered her, that she seemed unconscious of what had happened. Antoine had not seen her, or, if he had, had not been attracted by any thing that he saw from his work.

The duke had been writing upon a leaf in his tablets. "Here, boy," said he, tearing out the leaf, "take this to a man you will find at the end of the long gallery." The duke had contrived this errand, to send Nykin away; and Nykin, who had never



seen the inside of a palace, was prompt in his obedience.

The lady had arisen from the pedestal, all the time sustaining the weight of her child in her arms, who had not awakened from a quiet slumber.

"Madame," politely inquired the duke, "is that beautiful infant yours?"

"It is," was her reply, with a look of pride.

"It much resembles you. Is your husband an inhabitant of Rouen?"

"He is not."

"Will you now walk in?"

"I thank you, — yes."

At the close of this short dialogue, which appeared to lead to the successful completion of the plans of Foign Blas, he led the way to the palace, she still turning to the shop, apparently in the hope of obtaining another view of Antoine.

"No," said she, "impossible; it cannot be he; he is in Paris; the son of a nobleman. Yet how like him is the carpenter!" She proceeded a few steps, when suddenly appeared Marteau.

"Back," said he, coming between the duke and the lady; "that is your way, if you are Madelon de Ligne." He had not yet observed her child. She knew not her father, but asked him "if his name was Marteau."

"Yes; are you not Madelon?"

"I am; lead me to my father."

"I will." He saw the child. Almost frantic, he exclaimed, "Is that your child?"

"It is."

"Where is your husband?"

"At this moment, I know not. Lead me to my father."

"To your father," said Marteau. "What have you done?" He took her to his arms, and the tears fell from his eyes.

The duke, without ceremony, departed, resolved to set a spy upon her steps. He entered the palace, with a determination yet to succeed in a project which the unlucky appearance of Marteau had, for the present, frustrated.

Marteau at length found his speech. "Madelon, you came to meet a father in Rouen. His child's shame would break his heart. His secrets have been ever mine, and I know his thoughts. Does he know of your marriage? I never heard of it, till now. (Antoine again appeared at the door of the shop.) Tell me, before you receive a father's kiss, — tell me, — who is your husband?"

"First tell me, who is that man?" She pointed to Antoine.

"My apprentice."

"He is my husband."

Antoine, hearing her voice, rushed into the street, folded her in his arms, and kissed his child with parental fondness.

"Madelon, what do you here?"

"Antoine," said Marteau, in a harsh tone of voice, "leave her, and to your work."

"She is my wife."

"And wrongfully so. She had a father who loved her as his life; yet his consent has not been asked to ratify this marriage. Go in, sir."

"Do not separate us. Let us go at once to my

father. I have done no wrong; neither have you, Antoine."

"No, on my life."

"Go in, sir, or leave my roof. I am your master; obey me; and as you value my regard, as you value her love, approach her not, save in my presence, or your life, rash young man; and yours, imprudent woman, may be in danger."

"I feel I must obey him. Yet I may ask why. Sir, I cannot admit your authority over my lawful wife to be greater than mine. Why should I obey you?"

"Your oath," said Marteau, in a most impressive tone of voice. "Your oath. Go in."

"Without one farewell?" said Antoine, imploringly.

"Without one farewell," repeated Marteau.

Antoine looked upon Madelon. Their eyes gave expression to their thoughts, mutually understood; and Antoine left her speechless.

Madelon had watched with anxious eye his departure. When his form could no longer be seen, she addressed Marteau. "Hard-hearted man, thus to separate man and wife. By whose command do you thus inflict this misery?"

"Your father's. You have done wrong. Atone for the past, be obedient in the present, and you may hope for the future. Give me your child."

"You will not harm it?"

"Harm it! It is your child; and you, Madelon! I should not own you yet; but 'tis true;—a father's arms are about you. My child! my child!"

She was locked in his embrace. "My father! my father!"

The reader, by this time, has doubtless anticipated what is now to follow. Let it be told in few words. Antoine and Madelon had met at Versailles. First love, pure, strong, mutual, had, with the impetuosity of youth, led them to the altar. As circumstances soon prevented concealment, the truth was made known to the lady superior, by whose influence no scandal circulated, no evil surmises fell upon her fame. She knew Antoine, and, had she discovered their interviews at an earlier period of their frequency, she might have prevented the hasty marriage which gave him the control of Madelon, as his lawful wife. She was satisfied of the performance of the matrimonial rites, and was content to give her protection and comfort in the absence of Antoine.

What was Marteau's plan? Simply this: He had selected Antoine as the man to be her future husband; but he was not a confrère. When he had become a worthy member of the order, she was to be offered to him and affianced, if both parties should agree. For that purpose, she was sent for to Rouen; that in case Antoine should be elected to the confrérie, for which purpose he had been sent to Marteau, then Madelon should be his present reward, and return with him to Paris, there to aid the Huguenot cause.

Their interests are now to be viewed as one. Already has the foe of former years commenced a subtle scheme to interfere, to separate, and to destroy. Formidable machinery is brought to undermine the strength that union gives. How is it to be met? We shall see. The wheel of power has not yet begun to revolve. When armies meet to contest a field, each general weighs well the different forces called

into the line of attack, and which arm shall be most effective in the battle hour. Not always the number of the men engaged is the important point; the kind of men, and the kind of service which falls on them to perform, is the point of equipoise, when judgment holds the beam. Now are artillery the heroes of the hour; now the furious horse, in daring charge, win glory and seem to turn the fortunes of the day; while the slow, yet sure advance of the infantry of the line may become the sole reliance of the other routed arms, and, by their steady courage and unerring aim, achieve great deeds, and prove the saviors of the field. Not to anticipate events to come, let us place the rival powers in view.

De Saubigne and his Italian spies, soldiers and officers of police, renegades, apostate priests, and licentious monks, harlots in nuns' attire and name, backed by the power of Catherine, and the gold of Rome,—are on one side arrayed, and wait the signal to begin; to oppose which, and to defend the fireside and the roof of home, what bands appear? The righteous cause, the honest men of France, the secret order of the confrérie—they wait their hour to resist or strike.

When Marteau and Madelon had been some time in his house, he led her to the apartment appropriated for her use. He gave her most strict commands not to admit Antoine therein, unless with his assent. Daily she should see him at their meals; but both must forget that they were man and wife. "If his duty calls him for a time away, question not the cause of absence until his return," said he, "and then trust to your father as your firmest friend."

He left her, and joined Antoine. Into an apartment which admitted no light when the door was closed, blindfolded he led Antoine, and there, for an hour, he taught him to understand the work of an apprentice to a confrère. He descanted fluently on the charges and the oaths, and bade him, when, in presence of the masters of the signs, he should be instructed in the advanced degrees, never to forget that he was a man. He whispered in his ear a word. "Forget not that word, my son," said Marteau. "It will be demanded of you in time; give it, as you received it, in a whisper, according to the key on the paper marked with the star of blue. The oaths of fraternity which the confrère is bound by, are endorsed by the sacred honor of him who swears. Antoine, I am your surety. Prove yourself worthy to live or die with those who will live or die for you."

## PART II.

### THE CONFRÉRIE.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### TREACHERY AND ABDUCTION.

THREE days had elapsed since the arrival of Madelon in Rouen. It was the night of the fourth. Madelon was alone in her chamber. Her infant was sleeping. She had not seen Antoine for three days; but had determined to seek him in spite of her father's commands. She sat at her casement, looking upon the dark sky. Masses of huge black clouds nearly obscured the light of the moon. She had counted the hours from noon until near midnight, as the clock had announced them in their regular succession; — how lonely she seemed! — a father and a husband under the same roof, and yet to both a stranger. She wept.

A noise beneath her window startled her; some one pronounced her name — an unknown voice. Still her name — or was she dreaming? "Madelon!" again she heard the voice. She lifted her window, and in a trembling voice inquired: "Who calls?"

"A friend," was the response from below.

"I have no friends," said she: "do not mock me."

"Listen! Trust me, — I come to serve you. I come from one who loves you — from your husband."

"Where is he?"

"In an obscure part of the building, a prisoner. Dear lady, he bade me say to you, that, in consequence of what your father calls an imprudent act, you are to be separated from him, your child sent hence, and you are not to be permitted to see him any more."

"You surely do not mean this."

"I speak the truth."

"What am I to do?"

"Fly to him under my guidance," said the man, whose accents gave to his words the tone of sincerity and truth. "Fly to him, lady, for one hour or so. No one will disturb you, and I have the means to place you in safety, where you may see your husband."

"I will go with you. But my child, — I cannot leave my child for so long a time alone."

"Let your child accompany you. Your husband wishes to see the child. It will be a joyful surprise to him; for he believes that already a separation of child and mother, has taken place in accordance with your father's threat. Do not delay: time is precious."

"Wait but a moment. I will attend you."

She disappeared from the window. While she was arranging her toilet, and preparing a suitable covering for her child, the person she had just held this brief converse with stepped from under the window, and seemed to be busy with a cloak, which he had brought folded under his arm. He adjusted a mask to his face, and drew closely about him his cassock.



He was habited as a monk ; and besides a cross and beads, a dagger, the hilt richly decked with jewels, was attached to a girdle near to his inner garment, and partly concealed.

"She has no suspicion," said he. He beckoned to two men, who had been waiting at some distance off. They approached. "L'Araignée—Condonier."

"We are both here," said the stouter of the two, who was known as Condonier.

"There will be but little for you to do to-night," said the unknown. "Still keep watch at the door, on the south side of the house. Whoever appears at that door must not pass into the square. Should it be Marteau himself, fasten a quarrel on him ; if he falls, I care not, so you make good your escape. And, above all, remember, I do not wish you to shed blood. You understand."

"Yes," replied Condonier, "we understand."

"Away, then. To-morrow I will reward you."

They left him, and he again approached the window. At the same time, Madelon, with her child in her arms, came from the door. The unknown received her, and in a whisper said to her "On our way be silent, or we may be discovered. When once in safety, I will reply to any question you may ask. Now let us on."

"I confide in you, my friend, and will follow you."

They were gone ; and if any one questions the prudence of Madelon, let it be borne in mind, that, innocent herself, she thought not of deception in others. In her anxiety to behold her husband, she imagined no harm, although forbidden to respond to his summons. That the messenger might be a false

one, never occurred to her mind. Leaving Madelon and her guide, let us note the doings of others, no less important in the tale. Marteau paced his chamber in evident excitement. Although near the hour of midnight, he had not been upon his couch. A short time before, he left Antoine busily engaged in committing to memory the instructions received relative to his first degree of probation — he wished him to be able, if met by a master on the morrow, to give correctly such tokens as would prove his proficiency. No one has ever doubted the power of secret organization, though many doubt the strength of that policy in a government which should countenance its existence, disconnected with its own regulations of police or diplomacy. Much has been written and spoken against it. Still it thrives. It seems to be inherent in our natures to seek the knowledge of forbidden things, no matter by what means. Curiosity is an Eden-born vice or virtue, and, whatever the penalty, man and woman will follow its promptings; and it may be feared that Bluebeard's method of settling accounts with those who ventured into the Blue Chamber, if adopted at this time, would not destroy the passion for secret seeking, which stimulates so large a portion of the human race. The doings of many secret associations, in the nature of things, must remain unknown. Transmitted accounts are often exaggerated. Authentic sources of information have been opened in relation to some of these orders, while the more marvellous reports of the origin and career of others, must be still considered apocryphal. With regard to the confrérie of St. Bartholomew, many of its rites and ceremonies

are unknown. They may or not be now in the possession of some of the secret organizations of the day, claiming descent from parent societies founded centuries ago. That there was such an order as the confrérie of St. Bartholomew, is an established fact. By its influence great acts were performed; prison doors were opened, just on the eve of executions, in spite of guards and locks, and prisoners set at liberty by unknown hands, even on the scaffold. The instruments of death have been prepared, and about to be used in shedding human blood, when the victim was borne away, the officers of justice (themselves confrères,) making no efforts to prevent the escape, or giving their aid in a bolder form to him whose safety was their care. Something of the work of the confrérie is preserved, and as one for whom we have high hopes is soon to be enrolled among the tried and true, we abstain from further remark, until circumstances bring out the principles and practice of a confrère.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE WORKSHOP AND THE LEAGUE.

ANTOINE had sought the open air, by direction of Marteau. He had gone into the lumber yard; first, there to destroy the paper containing the apprentices' signs, and then, by the light of the moon, if it was sufficient, if not, by fixing a torch, to commence the last division of his work—a coffin, which he had been employed upon during the last three days.

This was the closing ceremony of the apprentice's degree, and there alone he should repeat his oath. Around him lay the benches and the tools, the coffin, piles of boards, and lumber. The shop communicated with the yard by a large open door which led to the dwelling of Marteau. A high wall surrounded the yard. The towers of a church were visible above it at some distance off. In silence Antoine traversed the yard, repeating to himself his task. Kneeling upon the coffin, he repeated the oath. He arose.

"I have done ; the secret is mine ; and though all around me is mystery, I will go on. Madelon ! Again that name upon my lips. Until I am approved, I am forbidden to call her wife ; but I cannot shut her image from my thoughts. Here is the evidence of my knowledge, to be divulged to no man, by word or sign. I am master of this key, and I thus destroy it, and fulfil my promise."

In the flame of a lamp, which was upon a bench, he lighted the paper ; it was soon burnt to ashes.

"And now to begin my daily work. The midnight hour is passed ; the coffin must be finished before sunrise."

Looking about him for a proper piece of board, from which to form the coffin, Antoine discovered the one he had marked for his purpose on the previous day. He lifted it from what seemed to be a considerable pile, and the body of a man, nearly stripped and covered with blood, rolled down at his feet. Antoine started, and exclaimed, —

"A man, and murdered !" He was upon his knees, endeavoring to discover if there was any sign

of life. Approaching footsteps fell upon his ear. "Let me hide this deed of blood. Who can have been his murderer? — in this yard, too. Marteau has killed an enemy. I will conceal the body." While in the act of concealing it, four men were seen to descend the wall, and advance towards Antoine. Two of them bore lighted torches, and seemed from their habits to be watchmen, or night patrol. Antoine, with folded arms, stood up to meet them. By his side lay the axe. One known as Maroine, first addressed Antoine sharply.

"Who's there? Speak! Who are you?"

Antoine replied, with great composure, "A friend."

"A stranger in Rouen, young man," Maroine spoke, in a gentler tone, "as I think?"

"Yes, I am a stranger here; an apprentice to the carpenter, Marteau, whom you may know."

"We know him well. But tell us why we find you here at this hour?"

"You find me here in the way of my duty — to commence my daily toil."

"What!" said the watchman. "'Tis about midnight — an unusual hour for a carpenter to begin his work."

"This is some case of necessity."

"Indeed! Well, young man, I regret that our duty should compel us to interrupt you. Your lamp attracted our notice. Incendiaries are among us in Rouen, and we are of a secret watch. Good night. Go on with your work. Your hand, young man."

Antoine drew back. His hand was stained with the blood of the unknown man. "My hand, watchman?" said Antoine.

"Yes, your hand. We met as friends, let us part as friends." He stretched forth his hand to Antoine, who still held back.

"I need not give my hand for that."

"'Tis stained with blood — have you a wound?"

"Yes, an accident." Antoine was confused.

"A deep wound, to bleed so freely. Let me look at it."

"No, no."

"Well, as you please. Let us return to the square."

Maroine and his comrades affected to return; but, seeing the axe, he suddenly stopped.

"Your axe is bloody, too. Was your wound inflicted with the axe?"

"No doubt of it."

"Follow the track of blood. He has no wound upon his hand. There has been a murder done. Call up Marteau: search the shop."

As Maroine directed, the men were following with lighted torches the marks of blood upon the ground.

"Watchman," said Antoine, "search the shop, if you will, but do not call the carpenter from his bed."

"You must be content for the present to remain a prisoner. Search the shop," said Maroine.

Two of the watchmen proceeded to the shop, and began their search.

In an under-tone Maroine addressed Antoine. "Did you not know, young man, that there has been a murder committed this night?"

"No."

The men returned from the shop.

"Did you find any thing suspicious?"

"Nothing, captain of the watch," answered both.

"Continue your search."

One of the men, following the blood, had traced the body to its place of concealment. He raised the board. By the light of his torch, he beheld the body, which Antoine had in vain endeavored to conceal. Maroine advanced, looking closely at the bleeding form before him. "'Tis the murdered man — and there is the murderer." He pointed to Antoine, who, swelling with indignation, could hardly pronounce audibly the words "False ! I am not."

Maroine bade him be quiet. "Go" said he, to one of the watchmen, "go for a magistrate ; arrest the carpenter, even in his bed. He is either the principal or an accomplice."

With active steps each hurried to perform his duty. One left the place to seek a magistrate, another to arrest Marteau. Maroine kept a position close to Antoine, who, having evinced no disposition to escape, was not held in strict custody.

"I will give you the advantage the law sometimes allows," said Maroine. "Confess your guilt. Name to me your accomplices. Yours will be the first chance for a pardon. Lose no time, or your friend, the carpenter, may rob you of the chance."

"I am not guilty. I have no accomplices. I have fallen into a snare ; but my innocence will extricate me, I have no doubt."

"Do you know that prostrate man ?"

"I do not."

A gate in the wall was now opened, and several persons, apparently officers of justice, entered, headed by one who bore the marks of age upon his features, and whose closely trimmed locks were silver-white. He

was the magistrate. After them came a crowd, which seemed to represent the common order of the people of the city. An alarm of murder had been given. As they were slowly and solemnly drawing near, Marteau, in the keeping of the watchman, rushed to the spot where Antoine stood.

"What means this crowd in my yard?" said Marteau. "Why do you hold that young man? and why am I thus dragged from my bed, and abruptly summoned here?"

The magistrate thus addressed Marteau: "Silence! I am here to investigate a charge of murder, made against that young man. Keep silence. Marteau, you are informed that you are suspected of being an accomplice."

"A murder. Antoine, is this true?"

"Do you ask me, Marteau? I a murderer! 'Tis false. You know 'tis false."

The magistrate requested silence. "Of its truth or falsehood I am to be the judge. Here be the place of trial; and if the prisoner be found guilty, here be the place of doom. The midnight assassin shall at midnight meet his punishment—death, by the law of God and man. In the name of the king and the people, I here do form a court. Maroine, stand forth. You appear as his accuser. Briefly state your grounds of accusation against this young man, that justice may be done. Accuser, look upon the prisoner. Prisoner, look upon your accuser.—Go on. But first inform me of the prisoner's name."

Antoine refused to speak.

"What is his name?" again asked the magistrate.



"He has not given it," said Maroine.

"Nor will I do so, to be disgraced. Was it for this I left Paris?" He was about to say more; Marteau checked him. "My life is yours. Take it if you will. My name shall descend unsullied to the world."

"Carpenter," said the magistrate, "he is said to be your apprentice. What is his name?"

"Speak it not, I implore you. My wife—my child." Antoine buried his face in his hands.

"Marteau never shrinks from his duty. If you are innocent, be of good heart; deliverance will come. His name is Antoine Bellard. I can certify for him," said the carpenter.

"Is he a native of Rouen?"

"No—of Paris."

"Maroine, has the body been recognized?"

"It has not."

"Allow all present to examine it. If any one can recognize it, he will speak; if not, all remain silent."

The people all examine, but no one can name the corpse.

A chair had been brought, and a sort of desk, at which the magistrate seated himself.

"Now, Maroine, go on."

Maroine stood forth, and began: "A short time since, passing near this place, being on a special watch, I saw a light; and coming up to it, I found this young man, the prisoner, in confusion. To my plain questions he gave evasive answers. I was about to leave him, though in some doubt all was not right, when I offered him my hand at parting. He refused it, although offered in friendship; and by the light

of my torch, I discovered it was stained with blood."

"Prisoner, you hear. Is this true? You will answer me. I am a lawfully appointed magistrate."

"Thus far he speaks the truth. I will not deny it."

At a motion from the magistrate, Maroine continued his recital.

"I asked the prisoner if he had not received a wound. He replied, that he had. An axe also lay upon the ground, bloody. With this he confessed the wound was made."

"Did he show the wound upon his hand?"

"He did not. He would not suffer me to touch his hands. He would not show his hands, but kept them concealed."

"Antoine," said Marteau, "show the wound."

"I have no wound upon my hand."

Antoine held forth both his hands.

"Maroine, go on, if you have any thing further to say."

"We then, under that pile of lumber, even as it now lies, found this bleeding body. I instantly accused him of the murder."

The magistrate stood up: "Antoine Bellard, you have heard the testimony of this man, and have not disputed it. There is the silent witness of an atrocious act; dumb indeed, but powerful. Maroine, on your oath, what you have said is true, so help you Heaven?"

Maroine distinctly uttered the words, "The truth; so help me Heaven."

"And your fellows here confirm it?" said the magistrate.

"We do," was the response.

"On your oaths?" asked the magistrate.

"On our oaths."

"What have you to say, now, Antoine Bellard?"

"But three words. I am innocent."

"Against the proof at hand, words are of little weight. As a magistrate, I am willing to temper justice with mercy. Yet is the crime a heinous one. Are you married?"

"I am."

"Make full confession of the fact; and if you have accomplices, name them, and my interest shall be used to save your life. But if obstinately you persist in your present declaration, you have but a few moments to live. Officers, prepare a block!" The axe that was used to commit the crime, and which is now stained with the victim's blood, shall be the weapon of the law to punish." The magistrate sat down. "I now pause. Make good use of the time."

Marteau took Antoine a little apart. "Speak, Antoine," said he imploringly, "and save your life."

"By the utterance of a falsehood? Never."

The preparations for the execution were speedily made; a block was placed in a convenient position, and beside it a man took his station, habited as the public executioner.

Marteau left the side of Antoine, and craved permission to speak in the young apprentice's behalf, which was granted.

"Although I may not doubt your proceedings here, I cannot see the signs of guilt in this young man. He is my apprentice, and not yet four days since

he arrived, well recommended to me, from Paris. A man should have a motive to commit a murder. Who is the murdered man? A foe to Antoine? No. It is not proved he ever saw the man alive. Not one here can recognize him. What motive had he to kill a stranger? I ask again."

"I have listened. Marteau. What you have spoken may be true. It is not proved that they had not met before; and the object of Bellard's visit to Rouen may have been to compass revenge for some insult inflicted upon him in Paris by his victim. The name of Bellard is not a common one. How comes the son of so distinguished a citizen as Bellard apprenticed to a carpenter? Pardon my inference, Marteau; your interest for him may be that of an accomplice. You may have contrived the deed, for which he is now in peril of his life. Again I offer him a chance for pardon, if he will make free confession."

The magistrate consulted with the officers for a short time, during which period the most profound silence prevailed. This consultation ended, the magistrate placed upon his head a black cap, and commanded Antoine to stand forth. "Prisoner, listen to your sentence."

"I must listen, for I am alone, with none to succor me. But first let me ask, on what authority I am condemned. How do I know you to be a lawful judge, with power to conduct a midnight trial, and to pronounce a midnight doom?"

"I am in the performance of a sacred duty. You shall be satisfied that I do not overstep my power. You are adjudged guilty of murder, and I doom you, within the hour, to suffer death by the axe,

unless to you some unknown deliverer comes to avert the doom. Guard the prisoner, officers, and prepare to see execution done. Marteau, confer with him if you wish."

"Am I so near death, then? I have a wife and child: let me but say farewell to them, and as a man, I resign myself to my fate."

"No, that may not be. Prepare the warrant for his death, and I will sign it. In the mean time, to your master give directions for their disposition, when you have suffered the penalty of our law. Follow me, all but those whose duty 'tis to guard the prisoner." Thus saying, the magistrate moved from his seat, and the assembly followed to the workshop. During the trial, there had been continually persons arriving, until nearly a thousand men occupied the yard; in various groups some were listening, others speaking of the events of the night. The party who entered the shop with the magistrate were preparing documents connected with the trial.

Marteau held Antoine by the hand. He had been urging him to promise some confession, and thus gain time. "I feel as a father would feel for you, Antoine. I advise you as a father would advise you."

"No! You advise me to dishonor. You cannot think me guilty, and yet would have me say that I am, to preserve my life. It is for Madelon I shudder—not for myself. Madelon and my child. You are her father—let her not know my sad fate, till a long time after I am dead. Excuse my absence to her as best you may. Do—no,"—he brushed a tear

from his eye, — “do not deceive her: tell her I am murdered, though innocent—murdered by the law. ’Twill break her heart at once — Do as you will; I cannot be less than man. I leave her and her child to your care and Heaven’s. I would live with honor. Without it I cannot live.”

“Look upon the block, Antoine. For the sake of your wife and child, live.”

“I will not lie, though death, in this ignominious form, be certain.”

“They have signed the warrant. You have but one trial more. I know you will bear it like a man.”

“I will. But tell me, Marteau, are men often murdered thus in France?”

“Daily, — nightly, — hourly.”

“My poor country! Is this true? One thing more. Know you ought of this bloody deed?”

“Only what I have heard.”

The magistrate, with the officers, returned in solemn procession, and the magistrate again took his seat.  
“Antoine!”

“Sir.”

“Take your position near the block, that I may formally deliver you to the executioner.” Antoine stood resolutely by the side of the block. “The bell of St. Angelo will soon announce the hour of three. Ere the last sound is heard, let execution be done. Prisoner, prepare. My duty is performed.”

“I am ready.”

“You deserve a better fate, young man. Your calm resignation, in a worthy cause, would command our esteem. For the last time, mercy is offered thee.”

"I will not lie. You demand my blood or my honor. My choice is made."

The hand upon the dial was near the hour of three; but three minutes remained. Antoine had bared his neck, opened his vest, and waited in silence the signal for his death. A minute remained. "Executioner," said he, "strike sure; let a single blow be to me death without torture. Farewell, Marteau; remember Madelon and my child." One stroke of the bell was heard, and Antoine's head was upon the block; the axe ascended in the hands of the executioner. The second stroke was heard; it was just descending: a voice in the crowd cried, "Stop!" — The third stroke of the bell was heard; — Antoine still lived. The keen axe remained uplifted. A wave of the magistrate's hand had staid the blow. His voice was soon heard. "A respite is granted for half an hour," said he, "to give me time to read a new despatch just received, and to act according to its direction." An officer had placed in his hands a packet, which he opened. After a pause, he merely said, "A despatch from Paris. It may not have reference to this case; but we are enjoined, in the execution of criminals, to stay proceedings at the receipt of any despatch, until the judge who presided at the felon's trial shall read the document and report thereon. Pardons have been received at a late hour, and read too late to save a life which royal clemency has been pleased to spare."

"To me this mercy is torture. No pardon can come for me. Proceed, lest in this suspense I lose my manhood, and lingering hopes to live betray me to a weakness."

"This despatch may concern the prisoner. Attend, officers and citizens, to its reading."

He commenced reading, in a clear and distinct voice : —

"Whereas, there is strong cause to suspect the existence of a secret society in Paris, having branches in all the towns of France, and subsidiary ones in the kingdom of Great Britain: Be it known, that any criminal, under sentence of death, may be asked the question: First, if he is a member of any such combination of men. Secondly, if he has any knowledge of their secrets, tokens, signs, watchwords, or pass-keys, or if he can point out to the officers of the king any member of such secret society, who is a native of France. If said criminal will divulge such knowledge to the authorities of the town, though he should be upon the scaffold, he shall receive full pardon, and a reward proportioned to the value of the intelligence communicated. Signed by the minister. Dated at Paris, July, 1582."

"Prisoner, are you connected with any secret society?"

"I am."

"Are you a member?"

"I am."

"Give us the name of its president or chief officers."

"I will not."

"Here you have the opportunity to save your life, and to receive honors from the king. How say you?" said the magistrate.

"That I will not betray my friends. My head is yours, for I am in your power. Never till this moment did I so realize the need of a union of men, deter-



mined, at the hazard of their lives, to check and overthrow the wicked machinations of the rulers of the land. To aid in the cause—to punish the usurpations of those who load the people with chains—to stop the frightful accumulations of lawful murders—such as will be mine, I pledged myself to the devoted band who are to be the pioneers of freedom. I glory in the cause, though I may not aid it. Such of their secrets as are mine, die with me. Question me no more. I will not answer. Executioner, I waive my right to time. Do your duty. I am ready.”

Antoine, having finished, again knelt down by the block. His words had caused a sensation in the crowd of lookers-on. No one raised a voice; yet the spirits of a thousand men seemed struggling to get free, while to each other inspiring glances flashed from eye to eye. The restrained efforts to applaud the gallant youth seemed only to fill the place with the smothered flame of enthusiastic fire, which must soon burst forth in all the glow devoted patriotism and love could entertain. The magistrate advanced, and placing his right hand upon Antoine’s head, addressed him :

“Antoine Bellard, keep on your knee. Turn away the axe; you shall not feel its keen edge. Other deeds await you. Complete your task, and the honors and privileges of a confrère shall be yours. Out of darkness comes the daylight; so shall you, thinking of this hour in days to come, have cause to bless your coming in our midst. Place upon his neck the badge.”

The executioner threw a chain of gold about his neck. The assembled mass had formed, in perfect order, a semicircle around the block. Each one had some symbol about his person, conveying his rank in

the order. Each one beside wore an apron of black cloth, upon which was displayed a bared right arm, the hand of which supported a mallet, such as workers in stone use at their trade. Their heads were uncovered. A perfect chain of hands surrounded Antoine, grasped with the peculiar grip by which the confrères were to each other known.

The change around him met the eye of Antoine, as, in obedience to the command of the magistrate, he arose, after having received the collar of gold. "What means all this? Who are ye all?"

"We are the confrérie. The ordeal passed, we hail you as one of us. You have firmly stood the test a brother of our order must undergo ere he can be intrusted with secrets involving his brother's fortune, liberty, and life."

"There has been no murder done?"

"No."

He looked about him for the murdered man. He was gone!

"Who, then, was the bloody phantom of my dream?"

"A brother, who is here to join us in the welcome which we give to each new confrère."

The brother alluded to, who had performed his silent part in the mystery of the initiation we have seen, now joined Antoine. Antoine comprehended all. He was soon met by the congratulations of friends well known at home, who he little thought were so near him in the hour of trial. All had been planned; this was but the initiation of a confrère. Was it a wonder that the existence of such an association could not be detected, when, even at the

threshold of its temples, so severe an ordeal must be passed through? Those who thus valued their word more than life, would not be likely to betray their trust. Yet this was but one degree. Thus met they in the open air at night, to go through their work, guarded from intrusion by sentinels, whose ears were never shut, whose eyes were keen of sight. The magistrate struck upon a stone held in one hand, with a mallet held in the other. Order prevailed.

"Listen, worthy brother, to your charge. Your oath binds you to obey the orders of him who among confrères is called to be the chief during the next revolution of twice six months. The head of our band, you will acknowledge your friend, Marteau. He attains this honor by presenting us with you, in addition to other services nobly and well performed for thē order's good. He has work in hand; aid him at the peril of your life. Brothers, join with him in his oath—'Death to the murderers of St. Bartholomew. Protection always for a confrère. Revenge on him who wrongs a brother. Justice to all, either friend or foe.'"

They repeated the oath when the magistrate had concluded. After them Antoine repeated the words of the oath.

Marteau took his apprentice by the hand. "Madelon now is thine, by a father's gift. You have deserved her. Let the tyrants of Rome tremble at the confrérie." Quietly, this large assembly dispersed to their homes. At the next call, what would be required of them? Ever ready, they waited but the word, and should a Huguenot army threaten Rouen, there were those within its walls to give the invaders

the welcome of friends. And now is to commence the work which brought Marteau from Paris. Now is the entire force of the confrérie, and through them all of the Huguenot faith, to centre upon a scheme to punish the violator, the murderer, Foign Blas. No assassin-like intrigue! To public execution they devote this wicked man. Though suffering from private wrong, Marteau would strike the blow for the public good. Reflecting upon the scenes just described, we can but remember the plans of Foign Blas.

## PART III.

### STRATAGEM.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE ENCLOSURE.

It will be recollected that the duke had contemplated the abduction of Madelon. In that he had succeeded. He had resolved to prevent Marteau from enclosing the cross, and also to hang him upon the gallows of his own construction for Foign Blas. The latter undertakings were yet to be accomplished.

Madelon, attended by her guide, had arrived in a short time at the Convent of St. Jean. As she had been directed, she spoke no word until after she entered the convent gate. She then inquired for her husband.

"We may have anticipated his arrival," said the monk. "Retire to rest, when the sisters have shown you to your apartment, and I will lead to you the man you most should love." They had now entered the building, which seemed lonely indeed. A woman, habited as a nun, met them with a taper in her hand. "Sister Clara, is that you?" said the monk.

"Yes, holy father."

"Conduct this lady and her child to the apartments near our lady Catherine. She expects her

husband, and you are permitted to attend him to her chamber when he comes. Go, lady. Be comforted. You are under a holy roof. Good night. If you wish to see me, ask for Father Ambrose." Sister Clara and Madelon left the monk alone. And another sister, Juanna, joined him.

"So, Ambrose, another victim! A wife too."

"Yes, fair grumbler, another. Is the Scot dead?"

"Yes, she is dead. And an awful end was hers."

"Is the child disposed of?"

"Did you not so order?"

"I am glad to find obedience."

"Who is this last one that you doom?"

"The daughter of a man that hates me—the wife of one I know not. But, I think, of the vile Huguenot breed?"

"Is she beautiful?"

"Yes, more so than the queen of the revels when she first entered the cloister. Time has changed you, Juanna."

"Yes, time changes all. Have you further orders for me?"

"No, go to your rest. You have kept watch well."

"Do you remain here to-night?"

"For a time. Let not this woman have any cause for suspicion in my absence. Keep those monks from this wing of the building. No wine to-night. They shall have the promised feast, though death comes to mar it. So the Scottish maiden died by her own hand?"

"Bravely."

"Foolishly. None die bravely who destroy themselves. Death comes soon enough without going forth

to meet him. Poor Scot! She has kept her word. Go, Juanna."

"Good night."

Thus abruptly ended the conference between Ambrose and Juanna. The monk slowly descended a stair case to his cell, — the nature of his visit unknown to any but himself. Sometimes it was his place of prayer.

De Saubigne had left Paris some months, in a doubtful position. A defeated intrigue had for the time incensed the virtuous Catherine against him. His influence was on the wane; and, to be prepared for any emergency, he adopted the plan of a sudden absence from the Louvre, and the occupation of his time in travelling unknown, before making a public entry into his native city. There were many disaffected citizens in Rouen. He, by occasional drafts, sent his retainers and hired German soldiers to the city, disguised as monks; quartering them in the Convent of St. Jean, which was in fact a guard-house, with a motley garrison of monks and soldiers, nuns, spies, and thieves. His suspicions of Catherine's plans against him were confirmed, and his active mind was well employed in insuring his permanent security. He knew Catherine's temper well; he knew her opinions, and forgot none of her pithy sayings, which sometimes had a terrible truth to convey. He had been her friend. 'Twas a favorite saying, with her, that "when friends became foes, they proved the worst of foes." With all his daring, and apparent recklessness of life, he was at heart a coward: none more than he feared death. Alone in the apartment

selected for his quarters in St. Jean, and which he called his cell, he was now engaged in maturing his ulterior plans. He threw himself upon a couch, curtained with rich velvet, of fawn color, striped with a delicate blue. The furniture of his cell was of the most magnificent description. On the walls hung pictures of that voluptuous character designed by the apt and famed masters of the Italian school, colored after nature's most tempting originals.

His thoughts naturally reverted to Marteau. He turned over in his mind the most cruel of his acts of wickedness, in the attempt to find a clew to the self-avowed hate of the carpenter. Perhaps, after all, it was not a personal injury he had done him. Sleep is the great restorer of nature's waste, and even the wicked receive the boon. For while Foign Blas lay busied with his evil deeds, his mind became confused, his eyelids closed, he muttered incoherently. He slept. With the rising sun Marteau came forth. Antoine had passed the night alone; for, according to the initiate oath of a confrère, if he was married, for four days and nights, they should hold no converse: as man and wife, they might meet, but not alone. And all that happened in these four days, was to be kept inviolably secret from the wife. Marteau had been some time at work in the square before Antoine joined him. Holes had been dug around the cross, and posts prepared to be set therein as a foundation for the enclosure around the line of his land.

"Good morning, father."

"Ah, Antoine. Well, boy, I have begun, you see."



"Shall we not be prevented?"

"No doubt an attempt to prevent my work will be made. This will try our strength. I am prepared, and before sunset the blow will fall."

"Shall I assist you?"

"No, not yet. Be at hand, I may need your aid."

"Madelon is well?"

"I have not seen her this morning. Look down the street, Antoine, and see who approaches."

"The street is not very full. A small party of soldiers are now entering the square."

"Soldiers! Well, Antoine. We shall see."

The soldiers alluded to made their appearance. One who acted as leader addressed Antoine.

"Are you Marteau, the carpenter?"

"I am not. If you seek Marteau, behold him there," said Antoine, pointing to Marteau, who was at work. The soldier saluted him respectfully, and handed him a despatch.

Marteau received it, and, observing the seal, said to Antoine, "Here are the regal arms. This should be an order of state. Read it, my son." Antoine received the paper, and read as follows:—

"To the artisan Marteau. The service of the state requires a gibbet. You have one, as we hear, ready for use. Deliver it to the bearer of this, who is authorized to pay you its fair value in gold.

"Dalmond, Mayor."

"'Tis true," said Marteau, "I have a gibbet. I cannot part with it for its weight in gold. I will loan it to the state for a day. It is at your disposal.

Yonder it lies. See it safely returned. Antoine, deliver it to these men."

The men followed Antoine into the shop, thence into the yard, where the gallows lay. The leader remained in conversation with Marteau, who inquired, "Who is to die upon that gibbet?"

"I know not the felon's name, artisan. He is a traitor, as I hear; condemned to die this very day."

"He deserves to die. The betrayer of his country should leave no name. It should be struck from the world's knowledge with his crime."

"Have you at hand a coffin and a rope?"

"I have not."

"What is that upon your work-bench?"

"A coffin, but unfinished; not complete. Besides, it is engaged. A king-created noble body will rot within its narrow walls. I can supply you with a rope."

"Do so."

The men were returning from the shop, bearing upon their shoulders the frame of the gibbet.

"Proceed to the Street of Justice; from thence you will have conveyance in a cart to the place of execution," said the soldier in command.

The men passed along as ordered. Marteau entered the shop, and speedily returned with a rope.

"Here," said Marteau, "is a halter, the proper decoration for a traitor's neck—the collar of disgrace."

"I require your aid in the erection of the gibbet. Will you go with me?"

"No. I cannot leave my house to-day; nor can I well spare my apprentice. But he may go to see a traitor die. Antoine!"

Antoine stood at the door.

"Go with this officer, and put up the gibbet. Observe the numbers, and you cannot mistake the joining of the beams. The screws are in the box."

"Let me first see Madelon."

"Not till to-morrow. Remember your oath. Antoine, take these weapons; conceal them; you may need them before we meet again." He handed him pistols. "Come not back without the gibbet. Farewell! Remember the word of the confrérie, and the sign of distress. Go."

These directions were given rapidly to Antoine, who said, "Never doubt me," and with the officer immediately left the square.

Marteau continued his work. The citizens, as they passed, frequently stopped to inquire what he was doing in the square. To some he gave attention; to others he rebuked the spirit of curiosity that led men to inquire into matters which should give them no concern.

One among the crowd lingered until a favorable moment, when Marteau was left alone. He stood for a moment in silence.

"Marteau!"

"Who speaks?"

"Coligny's friend."

"Brother, what news?"

"You are to be interrupted in your work."

"We are ready, are we not?"

"To a man,—by night or day. A thousand of our order are now in Rouen. In the tower of yonder church, a man can overlook the square. If you are in danger, the sound of that bell will gather them to your defence."

"Well done, brother!—well done! The time

draws near. My child, my Madelon, would be safer at Versailles than at Rouen. Come in with me. I will suspend my work a while."

They retired, and soon the square was filled with citizens, conspicuous among whom were the Gronder family, including Nykin, who, it will be remembered, had seen the interior of the ducal palace. Nykin, presuming on this visit, had materially altered his manner.

"Now let me be heard," said he. "I tell the story as I heard it after I came out of the duke's palace—the great duke that is soon to be here. She has gone, and nobody knows where; and that makes two virgins who have been spirited away since Sunday. Now, there is to be a meeting of the fathers of the city to do something about it."

"Well, nephew," said old Gronder, who was not stopped by his wife, "what is to be done?" "Why," said the nephew, "let us ask Marteau for his advice before all the virgins in the place are carried off."

Marteau's companion left the workshop, and hastily crossed the square, bowing civilly to the people as he passed them.

"Why did you let that man pass, and not ask him something?" said Madame Gronder to Nykin. "What does he know more than I? When I was in the palace—"

"Pooh! pooh!" interrupted Gronder. "Don't talk of the palace."

"I must talk of the palace," said Nykin. "It is not often one of us gets a chance to see a palace, and such a palace too."

"Go into the carpenter's shop. If Marteau is there, I'll speak to him," said Gronder.

"You will never do to talk, Mr. Gronder, upon such important matters; and if I were you, I would go at once to the clerk of the court. Marteau is a good man, but he has no wife or child, and he will not busy himself about other people's," said Madam Gronder.

Nykin had sought for the carpenter in the shop, and returned to Gronder with the information that he was not there.

"Well, wife, I will go to the mayor then; and afterwards we will join the crowd on the road from Conception."

More well-dressed citizens, with their wives and daughters, arrived.

The music of a band was heard, which attracted their attention. The female portion of those present were looking eagerly for the approach of the soldiers. It was but a few moments before they halted in the square—a splendid troop, who were to form part of the escort sent by the authorities to receive the duke. More and more, the streets wore the aspect usual on a gala day. Many who were to join in the pageant had never seen the person of De Saubigne. Others had some acquaintance with his grace. The authorities had not much regard for him, in consequence of his residing so little among them, and even affecting no great interest for his native city. In a political point of view, it had been no place for De Saubigne, being too strongly tainted with a Huguenot atmosphere.

To be given a public reception was a grand object to De Saubigne, and he cared not how cold and formal it should be. The people, as an act of common-civility,

could do no less than they now had undertaken, nor did any propose seriously to do more.

When it is borne in mind that the duke had been on the spot for some time, it will be no matter of surprise that he should make such communications or orders to the authorities, or to individuals, as he might deem appropriate or expedient. To divide the attention of the citizens, processions of various kinds were arranged, and a deputation from the church was added to join in the demonstration of respect tendered to a "defender of the faith." Chief of his own corps of spies, he could best judge of the true state of his affairs. When he first entered the city, Marteau occupied only so much of his thoughts as was calculated to ascertain the best way to drive him from his position in the square.

Subsequent events had elevated the person of the carpenter, in the mind of the duke, to the importance of a dangerous foe. The accidental intrigue with his daughter only increased his interest in his destruction; and at this moment we find the duke to be principally engaged in so directing his movements that success should be the result.

While the mass of the citizens were preparing to receive him at a distant point, he could attain his object with certainty. Madelon was abducted — was at St. Jean; the gibbet would soon be there, and with it Marteau. Such had been the duke's plan. But Marteau had remained; and in his stead, Antoine, the husband of Madelon, had been caught in the snare.

De Saubigne, in due time, was informed of this, and had, therefore, in some degree, to change his

strategic designs. With this slight occasional reference to passing events, let us continue to regard the movements of other personages in the progressive scenes.

After the troops had halted, liberty was given to the men to leave the ranks for a short time ; and with no other introduction than their uniforms, and the easy and free manner of soldiers, they were soon in lively conversation with the damsels of Rouen.

The merry laugh, the coquettish putting off of hands when a soldier touched a blushing cheek, the pretended escape from a delicate embrace, with other nameless but understood attentions, repulsed to be repeated, only gave the usual proof how the brave soldier is received by the fair.

The orders of the commanding officers brought the soldiers into line, and the faces of the females were lengthened, and shorn of their smiles. The order to march was given, and obeyed with that promptitude which characterizes veterans. The crowd followed them, delighted with the inspiring music of the band.

Similar scenes might be witnessed in different parts of the city, as the different divisions of soldiers marched to the principal rendezvous.

It was afternoon when Marteau again appeared in the square. He had discovered the absence of Madelon and her child. Having called her without receiving a reply, he entered her apartments. They were empty. Impatiently he waited, hour after hour, her return. She came not. Had she joined Antoine ? No : that was impossible. She might have gone out to view the preparations and display the occasion had so suddenly called up, and taken with her her child. Still this appeared unlikely. Marteau was alarmed.

While endeavoring to convince himself that all would be well, a frightful thought flashed upon his mind, as he stood gazing upon the palace of the duke — that lord who met her on her arrival, and was persuading her to enter its doors, might have again, with more success, attempted his design. Perhaps he had imposed too much upon her, and the protracted absence of Antoine might have led her to doubt. Judging him only by his actions, she might fail to see any sign of paternal affection, and even doubt that she was his child. There was a way to decide.

He ascended the steps of the palace. The door was shut. He rang the bell; in answer to which, a liveried lackey appeared, holding the half-opened door still in his hand. "What would you, that ring so loud?" said the lackey.

"I would go in," said Marteau.

"Whom would you see?"

"My child, my daughter, Madelon."

"No such person here."

"I will not take your word. I must be sure."

"You cannot enter, man."

"Cannot enter! Stop not my way. Show me to your master."

"He has not arrived."

"Then let me go in. If she is not there, why obstruct me? I would not harm you. Let me in, or I shall do you a mischief."

"You shall not enter. A mechanic may not find his way into this palace through its portico. Begone!"

"Bid the lightning not to strike, or the thunder to give forth no sound. You might as well."

Marteau seized the lackey by the neck, who



resisted; the next moment found him on the pavement, at full length, though not much hurt. Marteau speedily found his way to the different apartments, where he sought in vain for Madelon.

In his encounters with the servants of different grades, he found that some were men, with the feelings of men. Believing him to be a father in search of his child, every civility was shown to him. Others were less kind, but did not actually insult him. As she in reality was not in the palace, there could be no objection in convincing Marteau that they spoke the truth, in answer to his question. Marteau was satisfied; and as the inquiry for Madelon had always been in connection with the nobleman, — in fact the duke himself, — he was also compelled, from their replies, to believe that he was away from the palace also.

He left the palace. The lackey who opposed his entrance had complained to his fellows of the treatment he had received at the hands of Marteau. They did not sympathize with him. He was the favored lackey of the duke, and it pleased them to have this occurrence made public, as it would humble the valet's pride.

Marteau, with a heavy heart, sat himself down upon a piece of timber upon which he had been at work. He had resolved to wait until night for her return, by which time Antoine would also be with him. If she did not appear, then, at the usual meeting of the confrérie, he would make known her absence, and ask the assistance of the brothers to aid him in a closer search. While engaged in such reflections as his condition would suggest, the sound of music of a solemn kind struck upon his ear. The voices of

priests were mingled with it, chanting a service of thanksgiving. A crowd attended this procession, also, and their route appeared to be changed, so as to compel them to cross the square just where Marteau was at work.

Some few of the citizens were in advance of the procession, and had already commenced clearing the path of the boards and timbers.

"Here shall we kneel," said one citizen to another ; "but first, let us have a clearer way for the priest."

Marteau started up. "Touch not a stick," said he. "Stand, citizens ; do not kneel to man, or stone, or sign. To the Creator only bend the knee."

A monk suddenly stood between the people and Marteau ; in his hand, a large cross of gold. The people prostrated themselves before it.

"Shame on ye, men of Rouen. Not men — slaves to a power ignoble — slaves of superstition. Shame on ye, thus to rob the Deity of the homage due to him alone."

The procession reached the square in the following order : Two boys, in white robes, with golden censers in their hands, burning incense, first passed along. Next, two priests with crosses. Then followed twenty monks after them, one bearing the image of the Virgin. Priests of a higher order succeeded — the bishop, with crosier in his hand, the mitre upon his head, surrounded by attendants in the costumes appropriate to their rank. Then followed the crowd, led by the impulse which directs some people to be ever present where there is display, careless of the meaning or intent of the pageant upon which they feast their eyes.

As they passed, Marteau stood silent, but with a look of mingled pity and contempt, contemplated the scene. At length he spoke.

"O men, can ye be so debased, even in the presence of your wives and children? You are fit for the yoke; let it gall you. You do not deserve to know the blessings of freedom. Shame on ye, thus to teach your children the lessons none but slaves should learn. You should choose rather to pour out their innocent blood upon the pavement here, than thus to cement the bonds of mental slavery, filling their young hearts with the poison that kills both body and soul."

"Silence, heretic: heed him not, children," said the monk. "Ye have paid the homage to the emblems of the church which is its due. To your homes, children; forget the words of this pagan,—worse than pagan. Shut your ears against the heresy he would preach. Your duke will defend you in the right. This day his banner will wave over your heads, the chosen defender of Rome's power among the faithful in Rouen."

The people followed the procession off, the music died away, and Marteau and the monk stood again alone.

"Carpenter," said the monk, "though you are not of the church, but its enemy, I am here to save your life. I, one of its servants, am willing to spare. You have lost your child. I can give you tidings of her."

"Of Madelon! Where is she?"

"In heaven—else with the duke de Saubigne."

"She is not dead?"

"Unless with the duke, she is dead," said the monk. "You have been suspected of her murder."

Officers are to be sent here in search of her, and unless you produce her, you will be accused of her murder."

"I murder my own child, who I love as I do my heart's blood? This is some trick of the church, who would rid themselves of me."

"Mark the mercy of our order, in conjunction with the wishes of the duke. You will not leave the square. The duke wills not force. Fly and save yourself, and you avert present ——"

"Fly! Guilt fleeth. I will not move; and woe to the duke, if through him my child shall come to harm."

"Your blood be upon your head."

"Where is my child?"

"I know not but that the duke has protected her. Wait his arrival here at the palace, and you shall know all. Heed my words, and fly. The duke sends you this timely warning. Escape while you are free. An hour passed, you are lost."

Marteau seized the monk. "Tell me of my child."

"I cannot. In an hour, I will meet you here, if you determine to remain."

"I do."

Marteau left the square, and hurriedly passed through the shop to Madelon's apartment. This was fortunate for Foign Blas, who, satisfying himself that no one saw him, touched a secret spring, which opened a panel in the pedestal supporting the cross, and closing upon him as he stepped into it, he was out of sight.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE ATTACK.

MARTEAU returned, after a short absence. The escape of Foign Blas was well timed, for one was on his track with eagle eye. The magistrate, or rather the person who represented this character, had some intelligence of his movements; but the secret passage had for the present baffled him. He saw the monk enter the square. He had despatched some orders to the brotherhood, and had come to inform Marteau of his doings. Again they met.

Marteau bore in his looks the impress of his affliction. The magistrate hailed him — "Marteau."

"Brother," was his reply.

"I have great tidings of De Saubigne."

The name aroused him. "Where is he?"

"He has been seen, within an hour, in the streets of Rouen."

"How?"

"Disguised as a monk, a Cordelier — the crafty wolf."

"A monk?" said Marteau, "a monk? Then I too have seen him, and he knows of my child."

"Brother," said the magistrate, "what has happened?"

"My child! That monk but now escaped me. My child, Madelon, has gone — the monk said so — with the duke."

"Is it so? And where's her husband? Where's Antoine?"

"Sent to erect the gibbet framed for the duke by order of the state."

"Where is the gibbet?"

"I know not. Here is the requisition." He handed the magistrate the document mentioned before.

After looking a moment at it, the magistrate pronounced it a forgery. "Antoine, too, is insnared. The confrérie has work enough in hand. Ere the sun shall rise, Marteau, blood will be shed in Rouen. Our spies shall guard the avenues to St. Jean. Open your armory. The hour has come. A party of the guards are on their way to arrest you, if you persist in enclosing your land. To work, Marteau — to work. I will be near with succor. Open the armory. The men will be around you, and at the signal, arm them, Marteau, arm them." He was gone. He waited no reply.

The armory was opened. Under ground, covered by the humble roof of the mechanic, lay concealed every variety of weapon then in use.

Marteau was at work, resolutely walling up the cross, which was so important an opening to Foign Blas.

In the mean time, how was the magistrate employed? He first stopped at the door of a lusty smith. With him he exchanged a sign; the iron cooled upon the anvil; the fire in the forge went out. The smithy was deserted. The strong man and his journeymen and apprentice were on their way to the square. They were confrères.

On the steps of a splendid palace, the magistrate met its owner, in holiday suit. Their hands were joined in the grip of danger. "Marteau," said the

magistrate, "Bartholomew!" No more was said. One hastened on; the other back to his hall of pride, retraced his steps; summoned his servants; gave to them the word of danger. They, too, were confrères.

The magistrate stopped not until before the walls of a church, upon which a hundred masons were at work, placing the massive stones one upon the other, to endure for ages in strength and beauty. Under its roof, and protected by which were to stand the altars of the living God,—the master's eye caught the mystic sign. One by one descended to the ground, the hardy sons of toil, responsive to an injured brother's call, prepared to do him right, and to see no one do him wrong.

"At the altar, and at the grave, strike," said the perfidious queen, under whose orders the duke and his bands struck at Paris. St. Bartholomew's blood called aloud for revenge, Ambrose Paré promised it, in the name of the confrérie.

Now from the altar and the marriage rite went the bridegroom and his friends at the warning of a confrère. Now from the grave, ere the prayer is said, hasten the mourners, perhaps to die themselves, at the word which a brother's wrongs transmits with speed to a confrère.

The gathering begins. From every rank in life, hasten to their posts the members of the worthy band. Silently they mingle with the crowd. None but a brother can find a brother out. The combined force is secret, but their signs are sure.

Marteau is still at work, unmolested. Citizens gather about him, and wonder at his daring, caution-

ing him no longer to offend the duke. He works on. He asks their assistance. But none are willing. He drives the nails; he uses his saw; he heeds not their warnings. One side of the square is still left open. Through that, on the morrow, he will remove the cross. Thus has he spoken aloud to those who talk to him of fear.

Lournay, with guards, has halted at his side. Still he works on.

"Mechanic, desist, in the name of the duke."

Marteau listens, and his reply is silent scorn.

"Stop your work, I command you. Citizens, be witness that I have warned this rash man, and be convinced I do this duty under high authority. Behold my warrant."

"Let me see," said Marteau. Lournay held forth the warrant. "I respect the law." Marteau took it from his hand. "This has not the form of law." Tearing it into pieces, he cast it upon the ground. "'Tis under my foot—so would I tread upon the duke." He trampled upon its fragments. "I shall not obey it."

"Then," said Lournay, drawing his sword, "there are those at hand who will force your obedience. Seize the carpenter, and all those who give him aid." He advanced, his men following. With a stroke of his powerful arm, Marteau disarmed Lournay; then seizing his axe, he raised it over his head, in a threatening manner. "Approach me, who dares; I'll cleave him in twain who assails me. Citizens, stand by your rights."

"If ye do, citizens, resist, ye are guilty of treason. Pause awhile," said Lournay. "In the mean time,



mechanic, be wise — desist, or dread the punishment of the duke.”

Lournay had not a sufficient number of guards to intimidate the people, and deemed it prudent to retire and reënforce; and unmolested he was permitted to enter into the palace.

Marteau had no confidence in the support of the ordinary citizens. On the confrérie was his reliance. Lournay had made his demonstration before they had time to mingle with the citizens in the square. They were assembling. Though the force in the duke's palace was unknown to them, during the day previous many monks had been seen to enter by the different avenues to the palace, and but few had returned. Those among the dwellers therein, in the garb of servitude or of war, were comparatively but few, and Lournay's military acquisitions increased the force not much.

Marteau took occasion to try the temper of the people. Some again advised him to compromise with the duke. “Never,” said Marteau. “I am wronged. Artisans of Rouen, this is what you may all expect. They will profane your hearth-stones; pull down over your head the roofs under which your fathers were born, and where you and your children first drew breath. They would chain your minds, as they do fetter your bodies. Shall these lords in power longer fix for you the time and place of labor, and the price; and, as they do their cattle, work you when they will, for your water, your fodder, and your straw? If a foreign foe, with invading legions, ravages the land, on you they call to shield them. Do for yourselves the work of war, if war must be. Rise in your

might, and resist the first aggression of tyranny, and it will be the last. Let all bad rulers know that they are not the masters of the people, but their servants. Strike for your rights, as I will for mine. I will not stay my work at the bidding of the duke. He is powerful, but his is the cause of wrong. Strike for the right. Strike for life — for life's dearest quality — liberty, strike — prosper. Vanquish or die."

The sudden roll of a drum started the citizens. A hundred armed men rushed into the square, some from the palace, others from the street. In an instant Marteau was captured, secured, and carried into the palace. So well arranged had been the movement, there was no opportunity for any resistance. The people seemed paralyzed. The last soldier had scarcely made good his entrance, when the square was filled with other citizens; among them, the magistrate. A bell was heard to toll an alarm from the church tower near; at the same time there issued from the workshop of Marteau other citizens, armed.

"Where is Marteau?" asked the magistrate of a citizen near him.

The citizen briefly stated what had occurred.

"Marteau is in the palace," said the magistrate.

A stout man made his way up the steps to the door of the palace. "The door is fast," said he, after attempting in vain to open it.

"Enter, and rescue a brother. Ascend. If the door be closed, enter through the walls. Let our brother hear the voice of succor. Shout the cry of the confrérie."

Ladders were procured, and planted against the windows. Still increased the number of the con-

frères. Nearly a thousand now surrounded the palace. Some had already gained an entrance through the windows. Large hooks of iron had been fastened to the entablature, upon which was carved the ducal arms. A hundred stout hands pulled with force, and the emblem of the duke's rank first fell to the earth. They next attacked the marble columns which supported the portico. One by one they were seen to fall in fragments upon the pavement.

The door at length was shattered to pieces. Hundreds were instantly in conflict with the guards within, who in vain attempted to restrain their powerful assault.

Lournay had not expected so vigorous an attack, and was not prepared to repel it. His troops were repulsed, and driven from every point at which they attempted to make a stand.

At length, the room into which Marteau had been taken was forced; the carpenter was rescued, and in safety carried to the street. As soon as he appeared, the cheers of his friends welcomed him. The tumult ceased. The magistrate and Marteau conversed apart with one of the confrères.

He had imparted a secret to the magistrate, who now had intrusted the same to Marteau — a secret which involved the ruin of Foign Blas. A certain number were instructed to patrol the square day and night, to prevent surprise. This being arranged, one by one, even as they came, the confrères departed, leaving the future to the care and direction of their worthy leader and his friend. Lournay remained quietly in the palace, waiting the further orders of Foign Blas.

## PART IV.

### THE CONVENT OF ST. JEAN.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE PRISONERS.

MANY pages might be devoted to the history and architectural description of the Convent of St. Jean. To individual conjecture and assiduity of search may be left the discovery of its design and origin, capacity, proportion, and exact composition, as almost any extensive castle, built perhaps a century or two before, and described in a dozen different histories or romances, when read and studied by the lover of such detail of stone and iron, may be taken as a model of St. Jean. But as the events to be recorded as having occurred within the veritable walls of St. Jean, may not have counterparts in the legends, tradition, or history of any other castle or convent hitherto known, the task is assumed, at this time, of rescuing them from that oblivion to which the religious works of their day seemed to condemn them.

Should any doubt attach to the truth of this record, let the impartial historians of the Huguenots of the

sixteenth century be consulted. From the graves of the past, truth's witnesses will appear, that with the incredulous, truth in its power may prevail.

There are times and places where it might be deemed proper and necessary to be minute in the description even of a lady's head-dress, or the tie of her shoe; the color of a horse, his exact size and pedigree. It is well known that many persons ask rather how a hero or a heroine looks than acts, on certain occasions; and costuming one after a doubtful taste, or placing the other in an attitude not becoming, may ruin an author's reputation forever, who seeks popularity with the fair.

Now, the truth is, who built St. Jean, is not known. Exactly the time when built, is not preserved. The number of apartments, and how Foign Blas came in possession, not being important, have not been inquired into. Who contrived the secret passage to the square, is in equal mystery with the object of its contrivance: with the fact, that it existed, and for what purpose it had been used, we are acquainted.

Among those who should not be under its roof are Antoine, the young confrère, and Madelon, his wife. Another, too young to participate in the knowledge of the danger, still is involved in the sequence, of scenes to come.

Let us avoid the incidents which occurred to Antoine on his way to St. Jean. His suspicions were not aroused; no act was attempted which should require the resistance of Antoine, or give him occasion to display the courage he was known to possess. The trick had been successful. The gibbet was in the

court yard, and Antoine, the husband, not Marteau, the father, was near the other victim of his intrigue, whose presence in St. Jean was further evidence of the success of Foign Blas, who had remained in St. Jean since his last arrival through the secret way. The doings at the palace had not reached his ears. The day had passed through the hours of sunset, twilight, and darkness, into night ; and Foign Blas had determined, ere the sun should announce another day, that the consummation of his nefarious schemes should be accomplished. Marteau — Antoine — should be among the dead, and Madelon, a fit companion for the sisters of St. Jean. Thus were named his discarded mistresses ; let us pause : new events demand our thoughts.

In the second story of the main building, Madelon lay upon a couch, in a disturbed, distressed condition, which could not be called sleep. Two oriel windows opened upon the yard, through which was the principal entrance from the road. Moat, ditch, and drawbridge were beyond. Between the windows were full length pictures of stalwart knights, opposite to which were dignitaries of the church, in their pontifical robes. A lamp was burning on a marble column near the couch. Madelon started, as if from a dream. Her loosely flowing robes of white, as she slowly paced the floor, with closed eyes and colorless cheek, gave to her a supernatural aspect, more vividly marked, as the pale blue flame from the lamp struck upon her features, reflecting the agony of mind which she endured. She made an effort to speak. She dropped upon her knee, and in an imploring atti-

tude, with tears falling from her eyes—choked utterance of prayers, and stifled groans, she seemed to beg for succor of a relentless foe. Such was her dream. — While she was yet upon her knees, her face buried in her hands, Foign Blas, still habited as the monk, entered with noiseless step her apartment. He stood at her side. She stirred not. With his hands folded across his breast, holding in them a crucifix, as if in prayer, a moment longer, he spoke not. Then, in the mildest tones that ever came from the mouth of the truest man of God, he said, —

“Daughter, arise.” He placed his hand affectionately upon her head. She was awake. She saw him at her side.

“Holy father, my child!” were her first words: “where is my child?”

“With the sisters of St. Jean,” said the monk, kindly; “devoted to the service of the Most High. No harm can come to the child, while in their pious keeping.”

“Do not keep me longer from my child,” said Madelon. The monk made no reply. “Why am I here? Where is Antoine, my husband? and my child? Monk, you do not answer — speak!”

“Is my kindness to be repaid with distrust? Your memory must indeed be treacherous, if a few short hours can blot out the record of obligations.”

“The time is an age to me since I saw my child. Satisfy me by his presence that he is safe, and I will listen to aught else you have to say.”

“Your child still sleeps. The sisters are in the chapel, at vespers; the hour of devotion past, he shall be brought to you.”

"How came I here? Where am I? Who are you?" These questions were rapidly asked by Madelon. She had evidently been wakened from an unnatural sleep, and, though ignorant of her precise position of danger, she still felt the weight upon her mind of gloomy and fearful apprehension.

"Listen, daughter; my words may recall a scene of interest to your memory. A few hours since, a woman in tears sat at her window, looking in sorrow at the passenger below. An unexpected messenger bore a welcome message from a young husband, separated, by a cruel father's word, from his wife. That wife was you, lady. I was the messenger to her. My words dried your tears, and I conveyed you here to meet the man that loved you."

"True are the words; still, all seems like a dream, I am not with Antoine. Why does he not come to me?"

"He will come in time. I appreciate well your passion, though I have not known the joys of wedded love, to the church's servants forbidden. Whatever the glowing feelings of a youthful heart, the vow of celibacy consigns to a living tomb the first germs of true affection in his heart to the church devoted.

"Father, my child — you have promised me," said Madelon.

"Be patient; hear me but for a moment, and if you so wish it, your child shall be placed in your arms."

"I will listen." She, with feigned composure, reclined upon a couch, her ear turned to catch



a cry from her child, or the sound of the footsteps of Antoine.

The monk began: "Travelling to Italy, some years since, I saw a lovely girl, just fourteen years of age. Her home was the convent at Tours. Like yours her face and form. Upon my mind an impression was made, that led me to hope a day would come when we should meet again. Years passed. The meeting hour came. She was a wife, a mother; and from her own lips I heard her excess of joy. As I gaze on thee now, forgotten are all my vows, and my fond heart, bursting its unnatural bonds, bids me confess that in you, Madelon, I see the object of my early passion."

Madelon was alarmed at his manner and his words. She affected a calmness which the practised eye of Foign Blas saw was unreal.

"You are mistaken, holy father. I never saw you until yesternight, in my knowledge or recollection." She attempted a smile, a sweet smile, though an unfelt one, which was soon shadowed by the expression of fear, which came upon her, as the serpent-like glances of Foign Blas met her eye, which she could not look upon, nor could she avoid.

"Mistaken?" said Foign Blas. "Love is never mistaken in its object. In you I see all the beauties that were hers in the blossom, ripened into the perfect fruit of woman. Even if not the same enchantress, so like the same that my passion is the same — unalterable, unappeased."

Madelon's alarm increased as his manner became more impetuous. She arose from the couch. "Let me be gone."

"No ; you must hear me still."

"Gracious Heaven!" she exclaimed. "Antoine, husband, to what have you exposed me? Father, you do but jest. A cruel jest, indeed! Your speech is of love. I am a wife—a mother."

"I know it. My eternal curses on the head of him who made you so. The past be forgotten; the present claims my thought and acts."

"Did my husband know to whose keeping he intrusted his wife? I should not have believed you. You have deceived him and me."

"From my lips you shall hear nothing but the truth. I did deceive you; but will no longer. I never saw your husband. I knew you were alone. My spies had watched you. I seized a lucky moment; invented the tale that drew you from your casement; and now rejoice in my fortune, that has enabled me to speak in your ears the truth, and that has thus given to my embrace a counterpart of the fabled deity of love."

He was approaching her with outspread arms.

"Lay not your finger upon me. Come not near me. I feel that words are of no power. I am betrayed to danger, perhaps to death, by your promised aid." She was near sinking to the floor. Foign Blas advanced to her, with the intention of supporting her. His arm encircled her waist. With desperate energy she threw him off. "Away, monster, disgrace to the name of man! The companionship of fiends were preferable to thine. Apostate priest—unholy minister of the church—committing outrage under the mask of sanctity and religion's cloak! Let me depart."

"You are right, lady. 'Tis under religion's cloak I thrive the best, when fair dames, in virtue's mail, shielded by the panoply of conscience, oppose my wishes. Still in my own name and by personal merit, I at times succeed. You do not know me. My titles perhaps may inspire you with hope. I am no true monk. See, my girdle 's off; my gown and cowl are at your feet." With these words, he hastily threw the garments off, and stood before her, splendidly attired.

"How like you the change? Rouen's duke de Saubigne, Roland Foign Blas, is the title by which I am addressed; and though we are in convent walls enclosed, I am still Foign Blas, the master here—as duke or monk my claim on you unsatisfied—and unless the diplomacy of love which I have studied long and well fails me now, you will grant the duke all that the monk has craved."

Madelon gazed upon him with increased terror. She recognized him as the profferer of the hospitalities of the palace to a stranger, which she would have accepted, on the day of her arrival in Rouen. She attempted to speak, but could not command the utterance of a word. Foign Blas indulged in a smile, which Madelon observing, seemed to paralyze every effort she made to move or speak.

"I have delayed, lady, further speech, for your answer," said Foign Blas; "and as you do not avail yourself of the opportunity, be a listener to me for a moment, and I will acquaint you with part of my doings, which may not fail to interest you. Your father, I know not why, is my enemy. I heard from his own lips that he had built a gibbet for the duke.

Mark what I have done. That gibbet stands now in the convent yard. From the window you may see it, with the rope fastened to the beam. Your absence has furnished me with the means of an accusation against him for your murder. My agents are now engaged in the preliminaries of a trial. He cannot produce you; and upon that gibbet he dies. Your husband dies with him. My word alone can save them; and my word depends upon your unconditional submission to me. A father, a husband, a child, depend upon your decision. I await it now."

Madelon's reply was not in words, but tears. She fell upon her knees. In confidence she raised her eyes to Heaven.

"Protector of the helpless, into thy keeping I intrust my honor. My life is thine."

"There need be no life lost — no blood be spilled. Your father may be free, your husband go unharmed, and your child cheer thee with its smiles. Our own hearts be the repositories of our secrets."

Madelon stood erect. "Stop thy unhallowed tongue, or my cries shall drown thy voice. Is there no arm that for me will strike thee dead? Antoine! Father! Great God! — where are they?"

"Not near thee; nor can thy cries reach their ears. Let their names remind thee of their dangers. A few hours past, and if you call them, you will call upon the dead. I have begun the task, and the certainty of a death of torture should not force me to forego its completion. Be wise, then — three lives are saved. Their death can be no bar to my success, but shuts forever to you a husband's and a father's arms."

"A husband and a father's arms — disgraced, dis-

honored! My corse is thine — my living body never shall be." Madelon, overpowered by emotion, sank again upon the couch.

Foign Blas stood at her side. — While she was nearly frantic, Foign Blas was calm and self-possessed. A fearful odds in a strife like this. He was a skilful and adroit master of the weapons in his hands. After a short pause, the silence was broken by Foign Blas, who addressed Madelon in the mildest tones of speech, though the words themselves were like daggers in effect.

"Reflect," said he, "that there are those about me ready to do my bidding, though 'twere to murder the child you love so well before your face. Reflect."

"My child! murder my child!" said Madelon, with a heart-piercing shriek. "No, do not kill the innocent, harmless child."

"Reflect, and answer," said Foign Blas.

"I will," was the bewildered reply of Madelon. "I do reflect." She seemed to gaze on vacancy. Almost unconscious, she walked about the apartment, repeating, in an under tone, the words, "I do reflect — I do." Suddenly a smile lit up her countenance. Evidently some happy thought had inspired her mind with hope and courage.

"Where is my child?" said she.

"I told thee, in the chapel, with the sisters."

"Are we alone?"

"Quite alone."

"The men you spoke of — are they not near?"

"They are not. I threatened, to increase your terror."

"If I yield to that which my tongue may not utter, will you comply with one request?"

"I will refuse you nothing."

"I cannot speak it. If you have a weapon, kill me."

"I have a weapon for my foes, not to be stained with a woman's blood; and least of all with the blood of one I love."

Madelon had questioned the duke for good reasons. She was indifferent to all his answers, save one. She saw his sword, which had been concealed by the folds of his ample, richly embroidered cloak, and which her questions had caused him more fully to bring to view.

From Madelon's manner, even Foign Blas might have seen that she had resolved upon some desperate attempt to save herself from the perils that surrounded her. "A sword! a sword!" said she, in a suppressed yet determined tone. "Would it were in my hands. Duke, I may trust you?"

"You may; and as custom perhaps has impressed upon you its seal of propriety and reverence for things with pleasant sounding names, I have just bethought me of a way to quiet a tender conscience, that writhes under the accusation of its unheeded law. Attend me to the chapel. The necessity relieves you from the responsibility of the act. One of the ministers of the church shall, at the altar, consecrate our rites, and thus absolve you from the sin. Can I do more? I thus make you my wife."

"Your wife!" She shuddered and buried her face in her hands. "Your wife, while yet lives the father of my child!" Her eyes were upon the sword, that had just fallen from the duke's hand.

"Yes; he lives for you."

"Speak no more. He dare meet death — so dare I, but not dishonor."

"Will you not see your child?"

Again the mother's heart was touched. "Yes, yes; let me embrace my child once more, Antoine's dear image, and then I am thine, if thou canst take me then."

"Come with me to your child."

"No; let me see him here. You will refuse me nothing?"

"I said so. Ho, Ursula! Bring hither the child placed in thy charge."

"Heaven succor me," said Madelon. "If this fail me, there is still a way for thee, Antoine. Madelon will never dishonor thee." With all the fond affection of a mother, she waited the coming of her child. Ursula was approaching the gallery, and but a few steps from the door, when the cry of an infant was heard. Instinctively Madelon was rushing to the place. Foign Blas restrained her.

"Stay. No harm will come to the child. The sister will place him in your arms."

The few seconds that intervened seemed hours to the anxious mother. Ursula appeared with the infant. Madelon seized her child, and, with tears of joy streaming from her eyes, imprinted upon its face kisses which spoke a language that reached even the hard and passionless heart of Foign Blas.

"My dear Antoine! my child! O God, what an hour is this! Little innocent, will not Heaven hear thee? Canst thou not move thy destroyer to remorse? Duke, look upon me; look upon the child. Let us depart."

"At a proper time. You know our compact."

"I do — life for honor."

"Give to the sister the child again."

"No, not yet ; let him be a witness of the act of infamy, which you would compel his mother to commit. Look at him, duke." She held the child nearer to Foign Blas. "He is his father's pride — dear to his mother as her soul. See, duke, he smiles upon you. 'Tis like his father's smile, duke." She supported the infant with her left hand, partially resting him upon the duke's breast, "There is my child." Counterfeiting a swoon, she reclined upon the duke's arm. Suddenly she drew from its sheath his sword, and falling back a short distance, she pointed it at the duke, at the same time exclaiming, "Foign Blas, you shall not separate us again in life. Our safety is now in my hands. Stand from me."

Though somewhat surprised at her energetic manner and prompt action, the duke evinced no disposition to advance, but quietly ordered Ursula to secure the child. The sister was about to obey the order, when Madelon drew her child closer to her bosom, and grasping the weapon with firmness, bade her not advance ; then appealed to her for help.

"Take the child from her," said the duke, in a more decided tone.

"If she be a woman," said Madelon, "she will not do it. Back, duke, from me — away. Despair hath made me strong. Come not near me ; death is in my hand, if not for thee, Foign Blas, for myself and child."

The strength of the timid and gentle Madelon, though roused to frenzy by the peril of the hour, was



inadequate to fulfil her threat. Two other women had been called in by Ursula, and the three succeeded in disarming her of the weapon ; and also, though not without a struggle, they tore the child from her embrace. As they, in obedience to the duke's orders, bore it away, she clung to Ursula, uttering piercing shrieks, calling loudly upon her husband, her father, and her God, for succor and for vengeance. Foign Blas, with slow and measured step, followed her for a short distance, then turned away to where a new scene awaited his presence.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ORGIES.

IN tracing the actions of this eventful night, we must open to view an apartment of the convent which was often the scene of alternate mourning and rejoicings. The walls were hung with black curtains ; there appeared three altars, all dressed in the usual badges of mourning. Candles were burning upon the altars. Suspended from the high, arched ceiling by magnificent chains of metal and gems, were chandeliers of silver, decorated with gilded ornaments of painted glass.

Through the centre arch, which was partly concealed by heavy velvet draperies, made rich with trimmings of silver bullion, was seen a gallery leading to apartments on either wing of the building. The low sound of an organ gave notice of the approach of a

funeral procession. The solemn dirge was the signal for removing the curtain, and as it was withdrawn, two nuns were seen upon the first step of the circular stair-way which descended to the apartment; from either side, other nuns followed, meeting in the centre. After them, monks with lighted torches. A female, bearing a silver cross, occupied a position at the head, and another at the feet of the body of the dead one, who was now about to be deposited upon her bed of rest, in the dark chamber of eternity, where no eye may penetrate the mystery of her secret burial, whence no voice should proclaim her premature and untimely doom.

Well were kept the secrets of St. Jean. An impenetrable veil had covered all the transactions within its walls, as it concealed the end of the victims sacrificed upon its shrine in the wicked doings of its inmates. The train of death moved slowly on, as had others on the same errand, to the vaults beneath the convent, where lay the bones of friends and foes, which for centuries had mouldered away; frail monument of frail mortality. Dust—all that remained of the incarnate temple, in which had resided a spirit from above—lesson of every day, and every land, speaking in awful tones to the heart of man the truth that wherever there is life there must be death. Time gathers from the things of nature's perishable glory—in the palace and the cot, on the ocean, in the forest, upon the desert, the prairie, and the throne—material to erect his monuments over prostrate human greatness, virtue, affection, and power. The remains of beauty, as it appeared in youth, have, in charge of its last escort, accompanied by the occasional tolling of the

bell, and the appropriate requiem, descended from the sight. No tears were falling from the eyes of friendly mourners, thus following a lost one to the grave. The habiliments of death were there—a cold and formal funeral train. Hypocrisy even with the dead! The tones of the organ were more faint. Just as the last couples of the procession were leaving the apartment, Madelon entered it, apparently unconscious of all things around her. Again the swell of the organ, at the close of the requiem, was heard echoing through the convent. She gazed upon the sombre draperies of black.

“Am I in the tomb?” said she. “Am I alive? Am I among the damned, or is some vision of hell driving reason from its home? Brain, brain, burst, and ease this torture, which tears, but cannot kill! O God of mercy, for what am I reserved?” She fell senseless upon the floor. Again the organ sent forth its loudest tones. “Amen,” thrice repeated, came from the voices that surrounded the tomb beneath. The dead nun was in the embrace of her mother earth. The sounds aroused Madelon. She was upon her feet. “That sound again! A requiem they sing for my murdered child. Villain! monk!” said she, “where art thou? Why are sleeping your thunders, righteous Heaven? Avenging lightnings, why blast ye not this den of horror?”

The soft tones of most delicious music were heard, the air inspiring, the melody perfect; its character voluptuous and entrancing. Madelon covered her ears with her hands. “What mockery is this? The weeds of death are here, and the dirge is scarcely silent, when a dance, or its prelude, fills the place of

woe. Is there no escape? Shut, ears; be deaf to these wanton sounds. They mock my misery. My child! my child! I hear footsteps." She paused and listened. "Ah!" A fearful shriek escaped the lips of Madelon. She heard the cry of her infant, and rushed to the place from whence it came.

The gay music continued. Guitars and pipes had taken the place of the organ — the lighter themes as varied as the instruments in use.

The monks and nuns returned without the corpse, in merry groups, no longer burdened with torch or cross. Godfrois, who seemed the leader of the band, a rosy-faced and comely cavalier, robed in the gray covering of austerity which concealed himself, advanced to the centre of the altar, on the right of the arch — seizing by the waist as dainty a piece of human architecture as nature ever produced or veil ever hid — he spoke aloud. "Come, Cerisse, the grave has its victim — now for the hour we ever hail with joy. Remove the veil of death. Let our temple be lit for devotion. Come, assist me in a mass for the dead."

Upon the instant, and without any apparent assistance, the black draperies fell, or were taken up from the view, according as they were arranged, and disclosed the brilliant embellishments of a banqueting room. Where had been altars, were now tables, filled with luxuriant viands, rich fruits, and wines. The chandeliers were wreathed with choicest flowers; vases, at different parts of the saloon, were filled with tropical plants, of luxuriant foilage; their branches, here and there, meeting above, forming bowers of picturesque design, which concealed their inmates from the general view. In every niche was a statue

of a Venus, or a Grace ; in the panels, pictures of the warmest tints, illustrating the ever-living passion of love. At once a sensual and captivating atmosphere surrounded all. Every moment increasing its power, infectious and conquering in its spread. Godfrois lifted high a golden cup. "Listen, ye faithful ; as I raise the chalice above my head, let the exciting draught of the spirit of the grape be ours. Death to the enemies of pleasure !"

At the word, both monks and nuns filled golden goblets with wine, and raising them, as did Godfrois, in the air, as with one voice, repeated, "Death to the enemies of pleasure !"

The words were drowned in wine.

"Fill again," said Godfrois. "Life is short ; eternity long. A health to the wise man of Greece."

Again were the goblets filled. Again the assembly, as with one voice, repeated, —

"A health to the wise man of Greece."

"Now for the 'Miserere.' Attend!" said Godfrois. "The dead cannot hear us."

He commenced his

SONG.

"Fill the cup — doff the cowl and the veil ;  
Burn the book — away with the beads :  
Pleasure calls — Love laughs at all creeds —  
Let the saints at our pleasures rail.

"While woman, like these flowers,  
With her beauty charms the sense,  
Happy pass the joyous hours,  
Banish care and sorrow hence.

"Let the monk who has studied well our art,  
Bask in its rapture-glowing sun —  
With the wine in his hand, love in his heart,  
Drink the health of his favorite nun."

The last four lines were repeated in chorus. At the conclusion, their religious habits were cast off, and they all were costumed in a style worthy of lords and ladies in attendance upon the grand fêtes given at the Louvre by their mistress, Catherine Medicis, whose allies and agents they were.

The goddess of Pleasure ruled supreme. The brilliant sally of wit, called forth by some allusion to one of the changes of Jupiter, made to complete an amour, for which the god was so famous in fabulous history, and which was given by the artist with most life-like truth upon the wall, was followed by frequent responses from the lips of the nuns, and often with such oblique attacks upon propriety of language, that decency itself was violated, though the sentiment was in part concealed by ambiguous phraseology.

Evidently there was no restraint upon free thoughts, free words, or free actions. Godfrois, parting for a moment from the encompassing arms of Cerisse, who playfully reproached him for neglect, asked after Foign Blas. "Where is our lord and bishop, carnal and spiritual?" said he.

"I can tell you," said a nun, who answered to the name of St. Cecille. "He is closeted with a new penitent, in her novitiate."

A monk entered at this moment with the child of Madelon, covered with a short cloak.

"His new penitent has an heir for the bishop, I hear," said Cerisse.

"Yes," said the monk; "and here it is; to be given to your charge, Godfrois."

At this there was a laugh, which Godfrois joined in. "Let me see my adopted." Having removed

the cloak which covered the child, he held him up. " 'Tis a pretty one. What a pity 'tis it may not live to know the joys of love and wine."

"Is it a boy?" asked the nun, St. Cecille.

"No doubt of it," responded Godfrois. "We will christen him in wine. I'll be godfather. Cerisse, you will do the lady's part."

A large, elegantly embossed, golden bowl was taken from the table, and filled with wine, from the vessels of gold and silver which were around it.

"Stay, yet," said Godfrois. "Brothers and sisters, accompany me. Let us give the young convert an idea of our powers in music. If his ear is good, he will not cry. Come, follow me."

Again were the cups raised, ready for the signal of Godfrois.

"Fill, fill,—drink, drink," said Godfrois. "That is the sentiment. I give the word—to the charge, like a squadron of German dragoons."

Each struck the cup of the other with his own. The clashing metal was the symphony to the song and chorus which followed. While forming different groups in the exciting grand tableaux, each party selected companions whose spirits, congenial in evil associations, should give full license to sensual promptings, these rendered more stimulating by the intoxicating beverage so lavishly poured out; a dangerous atmosphere for weak human nature;—filled with the infection of poisoned passion and depraved morality, invading its circle of life in the current of tempting vice.

Again the filled cups struck each other. Godfrois foremost, with a goblet of colored porcelain, on a

superb framework of gold and jewels, in his right hand, filled with the rich liquor of Burgundy, led off the strain.

## SONG.

“Fill, fill — drink, drink,  
Happy monks — happy monks — to-night;  
The wine is sparkling bright,  
The wine is sparkling bright —  
But here — brighter eyes — brighter eyes  
To Love’s bowers invite; —  
Pledge us, Beauty; we drain the cup to thee;  
Love, true to duty, our torch-bearer be.”

The nuns responded with their smiles. Cerisse, advancing from her companions, thus addressed them: “Sisters, this is the heaven of earth. Fill full. One measure for the monks of St. Jean!”

“One measure for the monks of St. Jean!” was echoed from fifty female voices, already made tremulous with excitement and wine. The revelry of male bacchanals presents to the eye of sobriety pictures sufficiently repulsive; but the female face, when lit up by the demon of debauch, exceeds in its illuminating horrors the insane triumph of wine over the senses of man. Already did their flushed countenances revive the phantom of excess. Their flashing eyes, which seemed brilliant colored gems of life floating in moving orbs of liquid glass, spoke the thoughts which passion knows so well how to define. Their flowing garments and loosened hair were also signals of the near departure of the remains of modesty, which even the worst of women, where any mind is left, are anxious to retain. Their attitudes and gestures were in keeping with their thoughts, and represented them as faithfully as words.



Cerisse began in an enchanting tone of voice :—

“ Sing, sisters, we of love and wine ;  
Our hearts in our hands we advance :  
Come, sisters, come, the dance, the dance  
Man’s joy’s in wine,  
Woman’s more divine ;  
Let’s here combine  
Love, love and wine.  
Love, mirth, and wine, we welcome to our bowers ;  
A trinity to cheer life’s dreary hours.”

At the conclusion, each female reclined in the arms of a male,—the yielding waists of voluptuous beauty encircled by the embrace of sensual bacchanals ; and in one grand chorus, all gave loose to the burden of the first verse, —

“ Pledge us, Beauty ; we drain the cup to thee ;  
Love, true to duty, our torch-bearer be.”

Guitars, mandolins, and similar stringed instruments gave forth their silver sounds in obedience to the fairy fingers that were flying over them.

Others of the assembly commenced the dance. The child of Madelon was duly plunged into the bowl of wine, and its cries of fear were drowned by the laugh and shouts of its tormentors. From hand to hand they passed the infant, the faint cry of whom was occasionally heard in the pauses of the dance, or the rests of the music. A roar of distant thunder came rumbling among the turrets of the convent, and faintly reached the ears of the revellers. Still they danced on. The lightning’s flash, reflected from the walls to the casement, mingled its occasional flickering light with scented candles of the brilliant chan-

deliers, and colored flames of the lamps. Still they danced on. And while they dance on, regardless of coming danger, how are they employed whose lives were placed in jeopardy by Foign Blas? Where are now Marteau, Antoine, and the confrères? where Madelon, and where Foign Blas?

Marteau and his brave confrères have obtained the clew to the secret passage of St. Jean, and are at this hour securing the advantages to be gained by the important knowledge.

Antoine is endeavoring to escape from the convent, in ignorance of the presence of his dearly loved Madelon.

Madelon still seeks her child, while Foign Blas is preparing to consummate her ruin, and to destroy Antoine.

The sun had set in splendor on this day just added to the past. The blue sky of evening was studded with millions of stars, the night-ruling lesser light had sailed through the azure sea to the place where it hails the midnight hour; then came a change. Black clouds, holding the confined thunder and the fires of heaven, were gathering in the west.

A louder summons strikes upon the reveller's ears, as yet unheeded. The cloud of destruction, its path onward, still approaches nearer to St. Jean. The lightning's flash, more vivid, seems now to send heat as well as light. Again the infant passes from one to the other as the circle of dancers whirls from place to place.

Following the voice of her child, Madelon suddenly appears among them. At the top of her power of voice, she exclaimed, "Stay your wild deeds. Hold,

I command you, if you are women — if ye be human beings. 'Tis my child. Give him to me."

"Away," said Godfrois, "unless you join us in our devotions, which, as you see, outside these walls, would be called pleasures."

"Pleasures!" said Madelon. "The orgies of fiends are these ye celebrate. Give me my child."

They still kept her outside the circle of dancers, in the centre of which was Godfrois; his goblet raised in one hand, the child in the other. The frequent draughts of wine had rendered his step unsteady, and Madelon stood in terror, expecting every moment to see her child fall from his uncertain grasp. Pausing for a moment, as a lion gathering strength and courage for a last grapple with the strong foe, Madelon stood, then rushed into the circle. For the time, superhuman strength seemed to be hers. Amidst shouts of laughter from the women, she struck Godfrois to the floor, caught her child from him as he fell, and held the infant harmless in her arms.

"Mine, again," said she. "Thank Heaven, mine."

She had escaped them but for Foign Blas, who at this crisis entered. He held forth his arms to her.

"Approach me not," said Madelon.

"Vain all efforts to escape thy destiny. There is no power can interpose between me and my will. Restore the child to the sisters, or it dies before thy face."

The dancers heeded not the presence of the duke. They drank and danced, until a shriek, which came from the frenzied Madelon's very soul, caused them suddenly to stand still. When they perceived from whom it came, a shriek of laughter from the dancers

was the response; and the wild measures of the bacchanals were resumed with increased vigor and display.

But they saw not yet the cause that Madelon had for joy, in the advent of despair.

A man appeared near the columns which supported the arch. She recognized the form and face of him who was now cautiously descending the staircase; and just as Foign Blas was enclosing Madelon in his arms, Antoine — for it was he — quickened his movement in advance, and stood between them.

"I'm saved, I'm saved," escaped from the lips of Madelon. She swooned in the arms of her husband.

This action, and the loud command of the astounded Foign Blas, arrested the revel.

"Separate them. To the gibbet with the intruder, whoever he may be," said Foign Blas.

Antoine, with firearms in each hand, stood on the defensive. "Move one of you, and your commander dies." Both weapons were pointed in such direction that the threat might be easily executed.

"He is but one," said Foign Blas. "Let me die, so I fail not in my purpose."

Antoine was the only one present who was armed. He might be overpowered by numbers, but there was no doubt that more than one life would be sacrificed in the attempt to capture him.

Antoine was moving backwards towards the arch with his wife, who was unconscious of all that passed. He endeavored to take the child; but the mother's grasp was firm; and the infant, amidst all the peril

and confusion, slept, wearied with the mingled sounds of music and its own cry of terror, during the hours just passed.

"To the door," said Foign Blas. "Arm! Is my voice not heard? Am I Foign Blas? Whose power here shall overthrow mine?"

"Heaven's," said Antoine.

The word had scarcely passed his lips, when the apartment seemed filled with sulphurous flames. A crash of falling walls, and a peal of thunder, which seemed to shake to its foundations the convent of St. Jean, followed as quick as thought. The shock paralyzed the iniquitous followers of Foign Blas.

Antoine stood erect.

A monk rushed in, in breathless haste. With an effort, he uttered the words of horror and truth, — "The convent is struck by lightning!"

Then came a shriek of terrible import. The devotees of pleasure fell upon their knees in despair at the coming retribution for their evil deeds. Peal upon peal of thunder struck their ears. The roaring and crackling of devouring flames was heard, as the scorching heat was felt travelling through the breaches made by the falling towers. The convent was on fire; and high above the din was heard the cry of succor of the confrères, the signal of safety to Antoine, his wife and child.

"Fly hence!" said Foign Blas. "This is the weakest part of the building. To the chapel — fly!"

At his word they all rushed to the passes to the chapel, leaving Antoine and his charge unheeded.

Foign Blas' thoughts were for himself. The se-

cret way to the square of the Martyrs was his road of safety. He hastened to find a retreat known to himself alone.

Antoine stood with Madelon in the now deserted temple of licentious pleasures. He spoke her name. He impressed upon her lips the sacred kiss, the seal of devoted affection. She slowly revived, and, gazing full in his manly face, exclaimed, "Is it real?—husband—Antoine—child! It is. We are safe! We are safe!"

He returned her warm embrace. "Not yet safe, dearest. We are in a house doomed to ruin."

Again the distress-cry of the confrérie came through the arches of the galleries.

"What is that sound?" said Madelon, clinging closer to Antoine.

"'Tis the voice of succor. Come, come." Antoine returned the hail. "Come, Madelon, come." A moment's pause and they were gone.

Fast was the destroyer, fire, encompassing the devoted Convent of St. Jean.

The destiny of Foign Blas was with its fall to be fulfilled.

The confrères, headed by Marteau, had scarcely gained admission by the secret pass, ere the lightning's stroke had riven the massive walls. Divided into parties, some were engaged in seeking for their common foe, the detested De Saubigne, the infamous Foign Blas. Others, for Antoine, his wife and child,

## CHAPTER III.

## THE CRYPT.

IN following the fortunes of the now fugitive and powerless duke, we may also trace the progressing ruin of his unrighteous, false-named *convent* abode.

We left him hurrying to the way of escape. When he ascended the gallery, his way led through a lofty chamber, his private saloon. Thence he gained undisturbed. A narrow passage thence conducted him to a stairway of circular form. Descending this, a door opened into a strong room, which served as an armory; and here, through the painted windows, he beheld the flames spreading along the beams, and near the ceiling of an anteroom beyond,—a crash announced a falling wall—another—and huge masses of stone and burning timbers came through the roof into the apartment in which he stood. Above, he saw the angry storm-cloud which was to scatter its lightnings all around him.

Borne upon the thick air of the tempest, for the first time the cry of the confrères reached him. He knew not its meaning. His ignorance of its sound aroused his fears, and instinctively he sought to shun it by retracing his steps.

Again it fell upon his ear. He thought of his evil deeds. Conscience began its work upon the man, and the coward's spirit possessed him. Alone he groped his way in darkness. To gain the pass, he must now traverse the crypt, the hall of tombs, where, but a short time before, the Scottish nun had

been buried, to lie forgotten among the dwellers of the dead land forever. Seizing a torch, which was near him, he looked in the panel of peculiar form, for a spring which would open a secret sliding-door. After a moment's search, he found the spring. The slide, obedient to the key contrived to unlock its bolts, moved a sufficient distance to allow him to enter the passage to which the opening led. Again came the cry of the confrères. "What means that horrid sound, that thus pursues me, and at every step seems like a summons to some fearful death?" said Foign Blas. He paused. "Fool that I am, in this hour of extremity to heed the voice of man!" Shutting the panel, onward he moved to his destiny. Those he sought to avoid were in the path to meet him. Confident in the security of his secret and subterranean way, he rushed into the very embrace of ruin.

The inmates of the convent had been flying for their lives to the usual passages which led to the court-yard. Some were crushed among the burning ruins, while others had reached places which for the present were secure. They of the order desired first the safety of Antoine, his wife and child; then the object of their vengeance, Foign Blas. To all others they gave aid and succor.

The raging fury of the flames increased, though the rain fell in torrents which seemed to be of force enough to deluge the earth,

Repeated peals of thunder, without intermission, proclaimed the storm at its greatest height. The sharp, ascending streams of lightning, with its forked reflections and many-colored hues, from opposite points, appeared as if the earth was one vast magazine



of electric fluid, charged for the work of destruction, and the last act of doom.

Around the tower, in which was suspended the great bell of the convent, the red flames curled and encircled with their scathing forms the elements of strength of which it was composed. The shaking of the tower, as it bore the weight of the conflicting elements, caused the bell to toll; and mournfully it sounded the knell of the edifice, at the top of which it had so long and so securely hung.

There was a pause in the storm. The wind lulled away — the thunder ceased. The rain and darkness ruled for the time. The pause was brief. In silence the masses of black clouds rolled heavily along. From different quarters they seemed to approach, and, like trained armies, appeared to be wheeling towards a central point. A faint flash of lightning at a distance, for a second, showed the impending contact of the embodied deluge to be near. Another second, and it came. In cataracts, from the mountain clouds, descended the waters. The waves of a storm-stirred ocean seemed rolling in the air, divided in their depths by the forked and flashing lightnings, which illumed the darkness as if a world was at once on fire.

The storm-cloud, in all its force, burst upon St. Jean. The structure, formed of stone, of oak, and iron, could not withstand the blow, but, struggling for a moment against the fearful odds—shattered to its very foundation, as if the earthquake's power had been added to the storm's—it sundered, fell, and to the very arches where reposed the dead, this giant stroke of lightning descended, scattering the coffins and the sepulchres in fragments all around!

Foign Blas, through the chasms of the crypt, was seeking still to avoid the cry so often heard of the confrérie. As yet he had met no brother of the band. Enveloped in a friar's gown and cowl, he enters the crypt at a place comparatively free from danger from the falling walls.

What meets his eye? Planting his torch in a crevice of a riven rock, he reclines upon another, to breathe a longer breath. Around him are the dead, torn by violence from their shrouds. The bones of others lie near him — friends and foes, mingled in the same accidental heap. A falling parapet had closed up the entrance to the secret way. His only hope had failed him. In the confusion, not one of his train would seek him here. "Still am I safe," said he, "while death is everywhere around me. Yet this state of safety is my greatest dread. Ho! there, Godfrois! — My cries may reach him. — This way! Foign Blas calls! Reward to him who aids me. This way!"

There was no response.

"I call in vain," said he. "I will on, and dare the worst."

Through an opening, which appeared to lead up a stone stairway, was a figure seen, bearing a torch. Foign Blas' eye fell upon the reflection of the light, as it struck the dark and mould-covered wall beyond. "Ah, succor comes!" said he, and advanced to meet the approaching form. Soon they met. The torch fell from the trembling hand of Foign Blas, when he recognized in the companion of his danger the face of Marteau. It was Marteau!

"The carpenter!" said Foign Blas. "He cannot

recognize me. I will avoid him." He was turning away. Marteau held up his torch. "Monk," said he, "remain. Let me see thy face." He gazed upon him.

"Ah, is it so? We have met again, 'mid flames and ruin. Tell me thy name."

Foign Blas sought to avoid his piercing look.

"Ambrose," said he, "is my name. Stay me not, son. I would fly the dangers of this hour."

"I seek Foign Blas, the duke. He is here. You are in his secrets, if you are not he. Show me his hiding-place, or else we part not."

Marteau threw his torch from him. Its point became fixed in an oaken coffin, which had been broken, and its flame struck upon its fleshless tenant's skull, which seemed to smile horribly at the act. He laid his hand upon the shoulder of Foign Blas. "Come, monk, show me to the duke," said he, "then find your safety as you may."

"I know not of the duke. He is not here."

"What do you here, in this den of brigands and murderers? Monk, think not to escape this grasp; 'tis like death's. I am here the avenger. I believe you the guilty one. Come with me." He tightened his hold upon Foign Blas, who struggled to escape; which, failing to do, he next endeavored to secure a weapon, and with it effect what his strength of arm could not otherwise accomplish.

The iron grasp of the mechanic still held him fast; but in the struggle, the dagger fell from his doublet to the ground. Marteau released him, and picked up the poniard. Its jewelled hilt glittered in the torch's light, and upon the blade Marteau read the name—

‘Foign Blas.’ “Ah!” said Marteau, with a laugh of passion, and an eye which flashed with joy. “Villain, I was right. Foign Blas, I am Marteau, the carpenter of Rouen: the Michel of the Bastile. De Saubigne, you must die.”

“Not without a defence, mechanic, leader of a riotous mob,” said he. “In danger’s hour De Saubigne’s deeds are the sureties of his life. A soldier’s weapon is in my hand.” He drew his sword. “Now, if you dare, attack Foign Blas.” He was skilful with the sword, and placed himself upon his guard.

“My cause is my shield and strength,” said Marteau. “That sword cannot defend thee in the wrong.” With the dagger in his hand, he advanced upon Foign Blas, struck down his guard, and threw him upon his knee. “Where is my child? Speak,” said Marteau, “or die.”

“Mercy! mercy!” exclaimed Foign Blas.

“My child, Madelon—where is she?”

“Safe; uninjured by me, on my oath,” said Foign Blas.

“Thy oath, foul traitor, violator, murderer, is of no worth.”

“Stay me not. I have done thee no wrong.”

“No wrong! Lying renegade. Ask the streets of Paris, made red with Christian blood. Why should I waste time in words? My child is safe, you say. Well, what will you do, if for an hour I spare thee?”

“Thy bidding, whatsoe’er it be.”

“Is this the duke de Saubigne? this the favorite champion of the queen? the proud Foign Blas? I have not forgotten the Bartholomews. Murderer of my Madelon, you cannot live. Ravisher of innocence, your doom is fixed.”

"I will atone for all my wrongs."

"To man thou canst not. Justice claims thee. I am its minister. Dost thou still think there is a God?"

"I do," said Foign Blas, trembling in every limb.

"But, to save thy life, thou wouldst deny thy God?"

"I would—I will—I do. But spare me," said Foign Blas.

"Then, by thy Italian creed, there is nought left for thee to live for. Body and soul are lost—a great revenge," said Marteau. "Come, prepare to die." He lifted the dagger over his head.

"Not by thy weapon," said Foign Blas.

"No. The felon's death is thine. The gibbet's for thee. E'en as at Montfaucon, you hung the brave Coligny's mangled form for the city's scorn and insult at noonday, so shall you hang on the gibbet built for you; brought here at your command. Said I not right? My dream is truth. Come to the tribunal of the confrérie."

Marteau's powerful voice sent forth the cry of the confrères. Instantly was it answered by a hundred voices, echoing the cry; with torches lit, and armed, they joined their noble leader. At his word they bore away the trembling culprit. "Confrères," said Marteau, "he is yours. Give him trial and doom." Marteau had performed his task. He sought Antoine and Madelon.

To a place where the magistrate, with a chosen number, waited, under shelter near the gibbet, the appearance of the duke, bound hand and foot, he stands amidst the confrères. He quails before the

gibbet. He begs for mercy. In despair clings to the hope of life. Their ears are turned away. They deliberate solemnly—they decide—they condemn! The rope is on his neck. A shout of triumph ascends, drowning his cries of terror and remorse.

Not far away, a group were listening for a new alarm. Marteau, Antoine, and Madelon were in mutual embrace. The father had blessed the children. A murmuring sound was heard, as of many voices, and the name of Marteau occasionally fell upon the ear. Again the distant thunder rolled. Again burst forth the crackling flames. The magistrate entered in breathless haste. "Further from this place, brothers."

"First tell me of Foign Blas, — his doom."

"Death," said the magistrate.

Ere another word was spoken, with a loud crash, the walls, beams, and rafters of the last tower fell. When the clouds of dust and smoke had cleared away, the moon, struggling through the dense array of mountain vapors and murky clouds, disclosed the end. Among the ruins the gibbet reared its awful front; and from the beam, suspended in the agonies of death, was seen Foign Blas, who, in life, had been the murderer of innocence, the destroyer of virtue, the traitor to his God and man. Around the fatal platform were a thousand men, guardians of a people's cause. The great arch enemy to their creed survived this night; but the multitude now kneel in prayer, to renew their oath, and to invoke that blessing from on high which ever waits upon the righteous deed. The moon, in all her glory, illumined the scene. The sky, studded with the world's revolving

gems, was cleared of its obscuring mists, symbolic of the brighter day just dawning upon the Huguenot cause.

"'Tis done," said Marteau. "Eternal justice, thou art appeased. Rest, spirit of my Madelon. Martyr to liberty, may thy death, in blood with others of the faith, cement the bond that shall insure freedom to our beloved France."

In another hour St. Jean was desolate; the confrérie dispersed; and the heads of the order were convened at a house of joy, one which had been a house of mourning. The members of the family of De Ligne were gathered in safety beneath that humble roof which had sheltered, in times of danger, its distinguished head; and its annals, in after years, furnished proofs of the deeds here related as the acts of "Marteau, the Carpenter of Rouen."

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